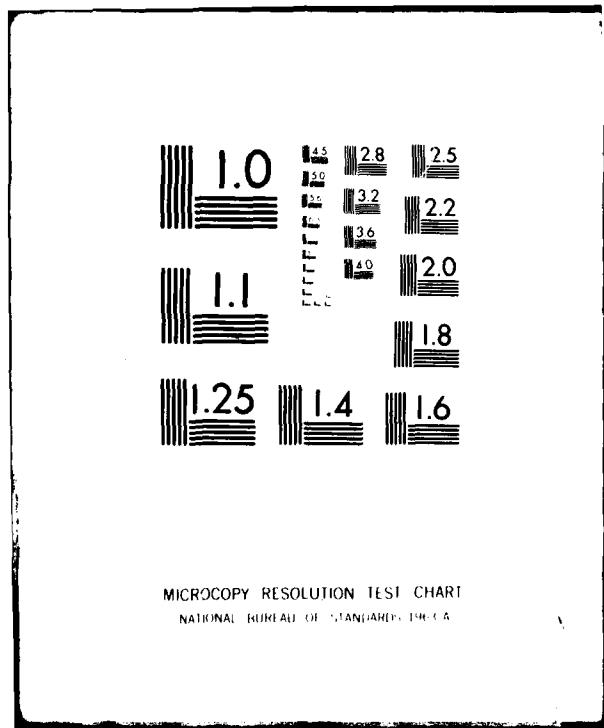


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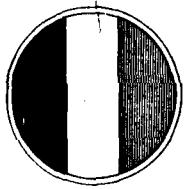
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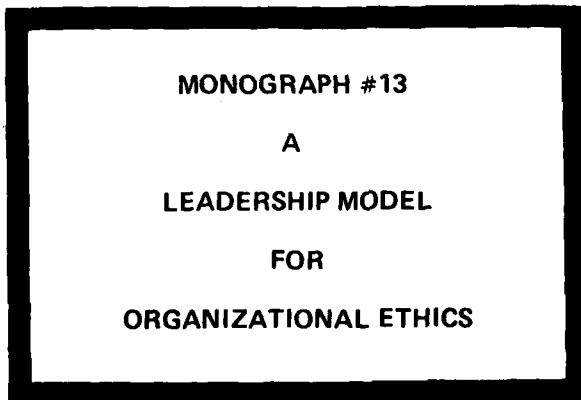
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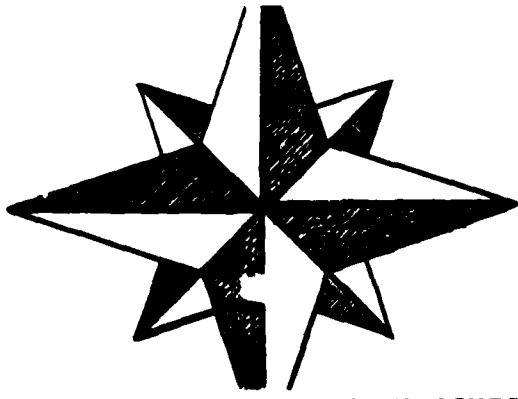
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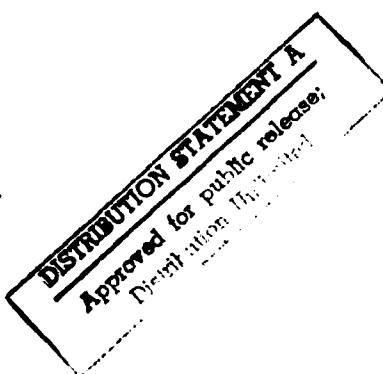
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LEADERSHIP FOR THE 1970s



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STUDIES OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER

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Leadership Monograph Series

This monograph is a follow-on to Leadership Monograph #8, "A Matrix of Organizational Leadership Dimensions." Monograph #8 proposed a model for examining leadership requirements. Nine major leadership dimensions were identified and described in terms of five hierarchical levels. One of the identified leadership dimensions was Ethics.

This discussion of ethics focuses upon several questions: What are we talking about when we speak about ethics in an organization? How can we best study the subject? What is the nature of the Army's ethical problems? Why do they persist? What are the most feasible approaches to improving the ethical climate in the Army? The intent is not to offer a solution to ethical problems but to suggest a way to structure continuing research into the area of unethical behavior. The issue is extremely complex and should not be treated in a cursory fashion. Ethical behavior is a core requirement of all officers at all levels. Unlike the other dimensions, it is not one that can be treated as if it were a skill that can be learned through a school-house course of short duration. The reader will probably find many points controversial, others pertinent, perhaps some redundant. If this monograph stimulates discussion and continued thought about what remains a most relevant issue for the Army and our society, then it will have served its purpose.

The views expressed in this monograph are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or the U.S. Army Administration Center.

Your comments, criticisms, and contributions beneficial to improving this publication or to identifying future research topics are welcome. Correspondence should be addressed to this headquarters, ADMINCEN, ATTN: ATZI-CD-HRD.

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MONOGRAPH 13

6 Leadership for the 1970s.
A Leadership Model for
Organizational Ethics.

by

10 Donna B. Ayres
MAJ Stephen D. Clement

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Foreword

"All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win
in the world is for enough good men to do nothing."

Edmund Burke

A pressing challenge faces society today: the need to guide the evolution of social values. Not only does society have an obligation to reflect changing social values but it also has a responsibility to attempt to shape emerging values. Clearly, if the leaders of a society do not accept this challenge, then who will?

The shaping of values, to include the complex question of what these values should be, is a profoundly difficult issue to address. Yet, it is precisely this issue which calls into question the multitude of ethical responsibilities facing a society's institutions. An examination of these responsibilities is no easy task, particularly in an era of individualism when "do you own thing" is an increasingly acceptable egoistic pursuit. Nevertheless, the need to explore the ethical challenges facing organizations is indeed imminent if leaders are to consider seriously the responsibilities facing them. This monograph is intended to present a conceptual framework within which leaders can begin to explore the issues of ethical responsibilities and values development.

Introduction

A national dialogue on ethics has begun, largely spurred on by recent and increasingly more publicized reports of major breakdowns in personal, corporate, and public ethical standards. The past few years have witnessed bribes and payoffs in business, scandals in public life, and a variety of other "shady deals" both in and out of politics. Suddenly, organizational ethics is a topical issue.

The American military, like the vanguard professions of medicine and law, has not escaped the scathing public criticism that has followed the revelation of acts of serious ethical lassitude. Charges of conflict of interest between Department of Defense contractors and military project managers, disclosure that some Army meat inspectors regularly accepted bribes from suppliers, and the ethical problems surfaced at the Military Academy at West Point have focused attention upon the Army's ethical value system.

Most soldiers are all too familiar with the usual inventory of behaviors and acts considered unethical, including theft of government property, illicit trafficking in drugs, and other flagrant violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. But there remains a broad spectrum of behavior that may not be so obviously unethical but that is nonetheless questionable. Included here are those behaviors normally associated with the tasks of reporting statistics and evaluating individual and group performance. It is easy to condemn leaders who submit distorted reports, but to do so without considering the act within the context of the situation and with respect to organizational objectives (including the existing reward/punishment system) constitutes a naivete out of touch with the real world. Any examination of ethical behavior within an organizational setting requires much more than mere concentration on the acts themselves. If an examination is to be productive, it must focus on the total system and the interactions of the individual with the group and the group with the total organization.

Many soldiers argue that the Army is no worse off than any other profession, and that the present discussion about ethics represents nothing more than short-term interest with no expected change likely. Still others contend that the key to resolving the Army's ethical problem(s) is to see that an ethical value system is institutionalized so that the implications of both ethical and unethical acts are ingrained into each individual's conscience.

Although nearly everyone would agree that ethical standards are important when it becomes desirable to emphasize high standards of conduct, many commanders turn responsibility for action over to their staff (most frequently the chaplain) or to an ad hoc committee. Generally, the efforts of such groups can be considered laudable, but, unfortunately, they are insufficient to address adequately the reasons why ethical problems continue to persist and why high standards are important.

The reasons for emphasizing high standards of ethical conduct are complex because of definitional problems (e.g., is personal morality an aspect of organizational ethics?), and confusion regarding which change strategy can best affect the ethical climate. But one thing remains clear in examining the need for high standards: setting ethical standards is primarily the responsibility of the leader.

Two Army studies (U.S. Army War College Study of Military Professionalism, 1970, and Drisko, 1977), conducted almost a decade apart, are illustrative of the relevance of a systemic perspective about ethical behavior. Among the important findings of these studies was the perception of officers at each grade level that officers at other levels are highly unethical. A significant shift in perception occurred between the time of the 1970 study and the 1977 study: in 1970 officers perceived their subordinates to be the least ethical group, whereas officers in 1977 perceived their superiors to be the least ethical. In both studies, however, officers felt that responsibility for ethical concerns should belong to top-level leaders.

The next section will explore the scope of this responsibility. It will be postulated that a preoccupation with high standards can represent more than lofty intellectual discourse. In fact, it will be argued that there are direct and tangible payoffs to both the individual and the organization for evidence of ethical behavior.

Section One

Ethics--a Leadership Responsibility

Ethical Role Modeling

Chester Barnard, in his classic work, The Functions of the Executive (1938), long ago asserted that ethics is a leadership responsibility. Barnard argued that organizations ultimately will thrive in proportion to the quality of their leadership, and that the quality of leadership depends upon the quality of organizational codes of ethics. According to Barnard, "the distinguishing mark of executive responsibility is that it requires not merely conformance to a complex code of morals but also the creation of moral codes for others" (p. 279).

Barnard listed two main sources of moral codes for executives: (a) personal values and (b) organizational values. Strother (1976), in an interpretive summary of Barnard's theory, emphasized a third source: the relative priority given to different determinants of behavior (e.g., desire for the perquisites of the position; fascination with the process of administration as an end in itself; desire to exercise power; preoccupation with meeting objectives and realizing purposes; and interest--either selfish or altruistic--in people). Executive behavior, theorized Strother, largely depends upon which of these determinants is singularly, or in combination, dominant because they reinforce behavior patterns. These determinants also suggest values that may be considered important to the individual and values that may be rewarded by the organization.

Whatever the source of one's moral codes, Barnard and Strother both agree that moral codes predispose one to respond almost instinctually in a given situation. Therefore, an understanding of a leader's moral codes allows one to view the leader's behavior as stable and predictable; in this respect, moral codes represent one's value system and can be expressed through one's behavior and statements. Barnard's thesis thus serves as a theoretical foundation for examining the ethical role modeling of someone in a leadership position because it stresses that ethical values are indeed inferred from a leader's behavior. Leader behavior in the ethical realm has substantial organizational consequences. If one considers that organizational "esprit-de-corps" is in part a function of commonly held moral codes, as does Strother, then leaders' efforts to shape moral codes become important sources of organizational morale.

Several other researchers have emphasized how critical ethical behavior is to effective leadership. Peter Drucker (1974) has stated integrity is one quality which must be brought to a leadership position; it cannot be learned. According to Drucker, leaders can learn skills to manage people better, such as group discussion skills; likewise, they can establish procedures and practices that are conducive to subordinate development, for example, that concern the organization's promotion system or its reward and punishment system. But, says Drucker, in the final analysis subordinate development efforts will succeed or fail in direct proportion to the presence or absence of integrity in the superior. Hemphill (1960), in a landmark study of the dimensions of the executive position, cited exemplary behavior as especially crucial to effective leadership performance. Similarly, Reeser (1975) and Stogdill (1974) have identified personal integrity as an essential leadership factor. Zimbardo and Ebbison (1969), and Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) concluded that a leader's credibility (i.e., his/her good sense, good will, and good moral character) is by far the most important source of the potential to be persuasive. In a comprehensive survey of organizational leadership, Clement and Ayres (1976) proposed that ethics is one of nine fundamental dimensions of organizational leadership.

Society expects its leaders to behave ethically. This responsibility cannot be taken lightly when one considers how important leaders are as a reference group. Newstrom and Ruch (1975) concluded from a study of 121 managers that "top executives serve as a key reference group to provide an important source of manager's ethical standards" (p. 32). Leaders can potentially change and control their subordinates' behaviors if they believe and recognize that employees pattern their thoughts and behaviors after them. They can seek proactively to provide ethical models for subordinates' behavior and can promulgate an official position, two actions providing a strong basis for the development of an organizational model of ethical behavior. Leaders can and must accept the challenge to take an active role in shaping organizational values. If they do not, the values that arise will be no loftier than the ethical norms flourishing in the society at large. Unfortunately, these norms generally reflect standards that are less stringent than those necessary to shape and guide ethical behavior.

The Payoff Resulting from Ethical Behavior

Some officers say that there is no real payoff in the Army for being ethical; to the contrary, they say, the organization actually reinforces unethical behavior. Many soldiers cite the low rate of survivability in the organization for commanders who routinely report accurate statistics or who pass negative information up to their superiors. It is not the intent of this monograph to prove or disprove such contentions. One need only refer to the Professionalism study

(1970) or the Drisko survey (1977) referred to previously to find support for the common perception that individuals who "tell it like it is" do not succeed in the organization. Regardless of the validity of these perceptions, the fact that they exist is enough to give them credence because the mere perception that a state of affairs exists de facto establishes that state of affairs as reality.

A focus on ethical behavior from a systemic or organizational perspective as opposed to an individual perspective allows us to consider the impact of the reward and punishment system on both the organization and the individual. The reward and punishment system structures the payoff that the individual and the organization each receives for behaving ethically. The payoff matrix vis-a-vis both the organization and the individual will be discussed in the next section.

Section Two

The Payoff for Being Ethical

Ethics and Professionalism

The public has become increasingly skeptical of professionals' claims to probity and competence. "A suspicious public, internal dissidents, external accusers, and a general reappraisal of social values" (Hansen, 1973, p. 21), have inpugned the social standing of such previously untouchable professions as law and medicine. The mounting skepticism is due to the ethical behavior of members of these professions. The predicament that faces professionals is affecting all organizations. This predicament can be clarified by examining the relationship between professions and society. Traditionally, professional groups have wielded substantial power and influence over the health and welfare of members of American society because of their developed expertise in an area of endeavor (e.g., medicine, law, religion, national defense) necessary for the protection, well-being, and survival of the society. "The professional has been the most admired individual in society because of the social status bestowed, the intellectual prowess attributed, and the excellent income earned" ("The Troubled Professions," 1976).

To prevent the unscrupulous abuse of power over the public, who are at the mercy of professionals' advice, a set of ethical expectations is imposed on professionals' conduct. Specifically, to reinforce professionals' sense of responsibility to their clients and to the society at large, the profession affirms values defining suitable interaction between the professional and the client. These values are codified as a code of ethics (usually, but not necessarily written down) that guides professional conduct by internalizing in professionals acceptable values, norms, and standards of behavior. In addition, the code informs the public that the members of the profession are acting in the best interests of the society.

The professions do not unilaterally hold power over the society; society also is able subtly to keep the professions in check. Society's power is manifested as social recognition: society confers high esteem, status, privileges, and perquisites upon professions in return for competent and judicious performance. The relationship between society and an occupational group or profession is thus a matter of mutual investment: because society decides that it will suffer sufficient negative consequences from a lack of developed knowledge in a

given occupational area, it essentially "allows" the occupation to strive for professional status; in return the occupational group commits itself to developing a high degree of generalized or systematic knowledge, to expressing a primary orientation to the community's interest, and to reflecting a high degree of self-discipline through adherence to a code of ethics. Compliance with these criteria is rewarded in the form of professional autonomy and prestige; implicit is society's trust in the ability of the occupational group to prudently dispense its services. The key variable is the ethical behavior of the profession's members.

The benefits of high esteem, status, privileges and perquisites, however, are not permanent: professional indiscretions can erode the public's confidence in a profession and precipitate both a loss of status and an increase in the public's scrutiny over the profession. A profession--or any organization, for that matter--has a fundamental responsibility to maintain its credibility vis-a-vis the public. Evidence of ethical conduct is a means to enhance both individual and organizational credibility; and, clearly, an organization or profession has much to gain by enhancing its credibility. As William F. Goode (1957) expressed it, external societal controls over the profession will be relaxed if it can be perceived that the profession is corporately self-disciplined. We might conclude, then, that professional prestige is largely a function of public approval, especially in an age of mass media communication. For this reason, professional status can be considered a somewhat tenuous characteristic.

Ethics and an Organization's Public Image

The result of negative publicity has been an erosion of confidence in the integrity of America's institutions and leaders, as well as a growing suspicion about the motivation behind professional behavior (i.e., is it public interest emanating from a community service orientation, or is it self-interest inspired by greed?). The misfortune that befalls a profession when it fails to realize the degree to which public approval translates into status and autonomy is increased external control to compensate internal failings. A loss of professional status produces more than a concomitant loss of public esteem in a profession and its members; it additionally restricts a professional's ability to function autonomously with implicit public trust and without the constraints of massive regulation and governmental control. Once a profession's autonomy is constricted, its future is jeopardized.

It is helpful to imagine professionalism as a characteristic that ranges along a continuum from occupational to semi-professional to professional. Those occupational groups at the "professional" end of

the continuum reflect the four primary criteria establishing professional status: (1) a specialized expertise acquired through training and education of such exceptional difficulty and duration that laymen can neither understand nor acquire it on their own; (2) a sense of corporateness or group consciousness that promotes unity, solidarity, and cohesion, and that sets the group members apart from others; (3) an obvious and primary orientation to the community interest that indicates commitment to service of a high order--to do "good works"--and that reflects self-sacrifice and complete dedication; and (4) a steadfast responsibility to a code of ethical conduct. Traditionally, the clergy, doctors, lawyers, and the military have been located at this end of the scale. In the middle are those groups that ardently are professionalizing themselves, e.g., nurses, social workers, and teachers. At the other end of the spectrum are such occupational groups as mechanics, clerical workers, linesmen, and the like, who are engaged in work that does not require a specialized knowledge base or substantial education and that is not crucial to the well-being of society. Unfortunately, as those professions at the professional end of the continuum come under scathing attack for alleged and actual infractions and ethical lassitudes, they tend to slip in status and thus to move toward the other end of the continuum. Because a profession's position (i.e., social status) is relative to the position of other occupational groups proximal to it, slippage along the scale tends to create confusion. What is resulting is that the traditionally revered professions of law, medicine, management, and national defense are diminishing in prestige, causing the horizontal continuum to sag in the middle.

In 1966, pollster Louis Harris began charting the degree of public confidence expressed in the leaders of major institutions. The results of the 1975 poll showed that business leaders had suffered the greatest loss of public confidence: only 19% of those surveyed had a great amount of confidence in the leaders of major companies. In fact, confidence in doctors, lawyers, labor leaders, the military, and the three branches of government had plummeted to all-time lows. Part of the declining faith in both leaders and the organizations they represent is undoubtedly due to a post-Watergate consciousness promoting increased scrutiny of individual and organizational behavior. Unfortunately, as newspaper headlines indicate with ever-increasing frequency, Watergate was not a unique occurrence. Publicity about scandals not only heightens the public's awareness of, and concern for, the predicament but also worsens it because publicity has a negative spill-over effect: guilt-by-association. Guilt-by-association has turned the transgressions of a few into a generalized obloquy. That the "bad apples" have become more conspicuous means that the criticism attending an individual or group of people is more likely to be generalized to the organization they represent and to all like organizations or industries. For example, fining one oil company for making illegal campaign contributions impugns the integrity of the entire oil

industry. The result: a massive and infectious blight of doubt, not confined to those organizations and individuals sentenced and fined, or under investigation, but generalized to American enterprise as a whole.

The corporate image has been blackened by public disclosure, which lays bare what previously only was suspected. What has been exposed is a performance ethic that seems to push for results (e.g., readiness or profits) at nearly any cost. Many leaders and managers, those held most directly responsible for results, tend to seek whatever competitive edge will produce desired outcomes. Often, corrupt and unethical behavior is tolerated in the name of high productivity, high profits, and mission accomplishment. Unethical practices, therefore, may be defended as a matter of business prudence--in other words, as "good business" (mission oriented). What defines the relative worth of business conduct, then, is whether or not business is conducted. For example, the impression that bribes are a widespread--and necessary--business practice in developing countries has convinced many business executives that to get business they must do business "their way." A survey of 531 middle managers (see "The Embattled Businessman," 1976) revealed that 48% would readily bribe a foreign official if bribes were the custom in the country involved. Consequently, exposed errant employees are often excused with the rationale that breaking the law is not necessarily unethical, or that what is technically illegal may not be wrong in the context of the situation.

Ethics and Individual Behavior

The subject of organizational ethics is pertinent if one believes that accepted practice (i.e., an amalgam of customs, precedence, pressures, attitudes, and expectations that form normative guidelines for behavior) has become a more powerful influence over individual behavior in an organization than either legal proscriptions, penalties, or formal ethical codes, thus allowing daily unethical acts to flourish. Tolerance and acceptance of common transgressions may lead to the discounting and downgrading of ethical standards. If one agrees that the avoidance of legal difficulties, organizational reputation, and even institutional survival are at stake, then ethical conduct is an important organizational concern, especially because the errors or dishonesty of one person can destroy the reputation of an entire group. In addition, without an adequate consensus of what is right or wrong, decision makers may not realize the limits of their own actions and authority; likewise, they may not recognize the limits of others' (e.g., subordinates, peers, superiors) actions and authority.

Although the business community has become the prime press scapegoat, it is not the only occupational group affected; "society as a

whole is suffering from an erosion of ethical limits" (Miller & Miller, 1976). The real issue is not the proliferation of government laws and regulations, which are responses to the problem, but an environment that is tolerant of highly individualistic ethics allowing for highly individual behavior patterns. As Herzberg (1974) says, the central issue is integrity:

Most of the problems in organizations
...are...not problems of personality,
but problems of ethics. (p. 54)

The challenge facing the professions and organizations in general is to establish congruity between the organization's self-image and its public image in order to enhance its political strength and legitimacy. One way to accomplish this congruity is to respond to public opinion. As Silk and Vogel (1976) state:

It makes a big difference whether the institutions that dominate a society exercise their authority according to legitimate claims or whether the public regards their role as improper or illegitimate. The business community has every reason to be concerned about the American public's lack of confidence in it. And the challenge now facing America's business executives is not to explain themselves better but to demonstrate that they take the public's concerns and criticisms seriously. (p. 34)

The Payoff for the Organization

In addition to the notion of professional status, there is another reason, one that has practical implications for organizational functioning, why an organization should be concerned about ethical standards. The reason has to do with external controls and regulations. Organizations rarely advertise ethical conduct as an organizational objective. Evidence of ethical behavior (i.e., seeking a reasonable return on investment, producing quality products while paying a fair price for materials and labor) does not have any direct payoff. But evidence of unethical behavior can lead to public distrust and cynicism. For example, public suspicion has suggested increasing governmental regulation of the oil and telephone industries. Over time, this negative publicity will likely lead to increased outside control and regulation, thus increasing the complexity of leaders' and managers' jobs.

In other words, an organization's ethical reputation will not necessarily produce tangible rewards, but unethical conduct can adversely impact upon both the internal working environment as well as the organization's external status and prestige. Ultimately, then, the organization's ability to function may be hampered seriously. Instead of calling into question the behavior of certain individuals accused of such unethical and illegal acts as bribes, payoffs, and illicit political contributions, negative publicity can dispute the central purpose of the organization itself. The impact upon service institutions, such as the military, is essentially the same. Organizations with high public visibility cannot afford the negative publicity surrounding publication of ethical misconduct. One result of all this publicity is the imposition of rules and regulations on organizational members. One need only scan a sampling of Army regulations to note numerous examples of routine requirements and controls pertaining to daily activities, i.e., requiring officer certification that soldiers were adequately trained, briefed or fed. Hence, the payoff for infusing an ethical sensibility in an organization is significant.

Recognizing that status allows an organization greater flexibility and autonomy to function, leaders cannot underestimate how important it is to maintain their organization's status. In this regard, they can take steps to insure that this status is not jeopardized by acknowledging the relationship between ethical conduct and public image. Organizations suffer greatly from adverse publicity connected with public awareness of dubious ethical practices. The Army is especially vulnerable, given that much of its autonomy is granted by Congress, which is especially attuned to public opinion.

While the Army's leaders have an obligation to be responsive to public expectations, it is additionally important for them to appreciate that their obligation goes beyond being responsive. Instead of merely complying with the public's expectations of high standards of conduct, for example, it is incumbent upon Army leaders to be proactive instead of reactive. They can be proactive by taking steps to shape standards that provide clear guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate conduct. If leaders do not accept this responsibility, the standards will be imposed on them externally and thus their ability to control their internal ethical environment will be handicapped critically. Since the leadership role, like the professional role, requires substantial autonomy for effective functioning, the right to exercise authority over internal matters should not be abrogated by default. By fully accepting responsibility to be proactive, Army leaders can gain the freedom they need to protect the well-being and future survivability of their institution.

The Payoff for the Individual

Rewards for ethical behavior extend beyond increased autonomy and status for the organization as a whole. Evidence of ethical behavior also permits organizational members to function within a climate allowing for greater individual choice. The officer can operate under the assumption that it is he or she--not the organization--who exercises control over behavior. The more the organization trusts the individual to control prudently his or her own behavior, the less responsibility it has to assume in order to ensure that ethical standards are upheld. The presence or absence of control mechanisms (e.g., requiring third party certification that an officer has not stolen BOQ property after TDY occupancy) communicates to the person that the organization is or is not trusting him or her to behave in a scrupulous manner. The presence of external controls contradicts the Army's pronouncement that special trust and confidence reside in the officer as a professional representative of the organization.

Not only does the individual find herself or himself possessing greater freedom of action if she or he behaves ethically, but there are also intrinsic satisfactions to be derived from behavioral evidence of high standards. One can suppose that the person who is not entangled in a web of conflicting standards, not caught in the throes of unhealthy competition to out-achieve a peer, nor overly concerned about pleasing a superior or accomplishing objectives at any expense would be a more self-satisfied person, one who experiences less guilt, frustration, anxiety, boredom, and stress. One might also surmise that greater motivation, morale, and job satisfaction could be likely byproducts of increased interpersonal trust generated by adherence to ethical standards.

Section Three

Defining the Problem

Defining the Domain of Ethical Behavior

Just as there is a plethora of viewpoints about institutional or organizational ethics, there is also an abundance of definitions about what constitutes the domain of ethical/unethical behavior. The many available definitions focus upon ideal standards, a sense of obligation to rules governing interpersonal conduct, and an evaluation of the "rightness" and "wrongness" of given behavior. Examples of some definitions prominent in the business literature follow:

Ethics is concerned not with what is but with what should be. ("After Watergate," 1973, p. 178)

Business ethics...concerns the "rightness" or "wrongness" of an action. Ethics extend beyond laws and regulations. It deals with the fairness of relationships between individuals interacting as human beings and as representatives of corporate entities. Consequently, business ethics involves the moral justification of the businessman's actions in relation to his fellowmen. (Wilkins, 1975, p. 16)

Ethics is a practical science based on reason, concerned with action. It is not a matter of religion or revelation. Using reason alone, ethics sets forth what ought to be. (Purcell, 1975, p. 43)

Ethics concerns the rules by which individual and corporate responsibilities are carried out. (Brenner & Molander, 1977, p. 68)

Ethics are concerned with judgments of "what is right" (or moral) and "what is wrong" (or immoral), and conclusions are drawn regarding "what ought to be" instead of "what is." The term ethical standards is used to

describe conformity to widely accepted modes of conduct. These, in turn, are governed to a large extent by customs, manners, and values that a particular society adopts as guidelines for regulating interpersonal behavior. (Schollhammer, 1977, p. 54-55)

(Ethics is) the study of right and wrong, usually including the determining and encouraging of what is right. (Brown, 1976, p. 16)

Ethics is reflection on the moral meaning of actionEthics does not offer a single, absolute right way of behavior....Ethics is the process by which individuals, social groups, and societies evaluate their actions from the perspective of moral principles and values....When we speak of "ethics" and ethical reflection, we mean the activity of applying these various yardsticks to the actions of persons and groups. (McCoy, Juergensmeyer, & Twining, 1975, p. 1)

The subject of ethical conduct in an organizational setting has been discussed under several rubrics, for example: Business Ethics, Professional Ethics, Managerial Ethics, Applied Ethics, Corporate Ethics, Employee Ethics, Organizational Ethics, Organizational Morality, Executive Value Systems and Managerial Value Systems. From the various definitions of business or organizational ethics suggested by various writers, one can synthesize a definition:

Ethics, in an organizational context, comprises a set of behavioral standards, expressed as norms, principles, procedural guides, or rules of behavior, defining what is appropriate (right) and inappropriate (wrong). Grounded in a system of values and moral principles, these behavioral standards are commonly understood and generally accepted by group members as legitimate and purposeful guidelines for directing personal and professional conduct within an organizational setting. Subject to different degrees of sanctioning, standards of ethical behavior make group functioning more effective and guide the process of decision making. Ethical standards in an organization are adhered to because (a) they are considered legitimate and practical and are consequently internalized as having useful authority over behavior (in this regard, con-

science and guilt internally reinforce adherence); or (b) they are enforced by threat or use of punishment and other external sanctions. Any violation of these standards constitutes unethical behavior.

Generally speaking, precise definitions of ethics in term of behaviors are difficult to explicate. The difficulty arises because the domain of ethical behavior has yet to be described. Although few writers agree about how to rank order behaviors along a continuum of ethicality, it seems that the more overt behaviors, such as falsifying records or making a bribe, are generally considered unethical; there is less agreement, however, concerning covert behaviors falling into a grey area of ethics. There is also some confusion about whether or not a person's moral behavior is an aspect of his or her ethical behavior in the organization. For the most part, researchers have concentrated on the explicitly unethical behaviors because of the difficulty in defining ambiguous ethical actions. This is not to say that the domain of ethics cannot be defined, but arriving at an understanding of the full range of the domain is a conceptually complicated undertaking that requires considerable research.

Defining the domain of ethical/unethical behaviors involves defining a construct, which is an abstract concept. When we think about the construct of ethics, we must consider more than observable behaviors. We must also consider cognitive processes that lead to understanding, insight, and awareness. Being ethical is not tantamount to demonstrating a skill that can be learned in a classroom. One cannot be trained or taught to be ethical overnight, even though ethical behavior is developed through long-term learning. Neither is the learning required to predispose one to behave ethically in situations involving a conflict between choices merely a matter of religious learning. To date, the construct of ethics as it applies to organizational life has not been developed to the point of understanding exactly what kinds of things we should have in mind when we discuss ethical behavior in organizational settings. Until the disparate assumptions and theories about human behavior and organizational behavior across disciplines (e.g., theology, philosophy, social psychology, organizational and industrial psychology, sociology, organizational theory, political science, economics) are integrated to the point where common understandings about individual, group, and organizational behavior can be articulated, it is difficult, if not pointless, to proceed as if one presumed to have clarified the domain.

For the above reason, a definition of ethics along a continuum of behavior from ethical to unethical acts will not be presented in this monograph. Instead, it is hoped that the discussion offered here will assist the reader in comprehending the scope of the problem one encounters in attempting to examine ethical behavior in an organiza-

tional setting. We intend only to suggest what is involved in examining ethical behavior and thus aim to present a framework for continued study of this subject area. At this stage of conceptual development, then, specifics about the whys and wherefores of ethical behavior will not be addressed. Before one can even consider specifics (i.e., detailed subject-matter curriculum regarding ethical instruction at the various educational levels in the Army school system), one needs a perspective on the entire subject area. We would be foolish to present specifics without an appreciation of the generalities to which such specifics apply. To presume such a task is akin to putting together a jigsaw puzzle without any idea of what the puzzle is supposed to look like when it is complete. Consequently, what follows is a discussion of pertinent findings, issues, and suppositions that we have derived after an initial review of some of the vast literature dealing with ethical behavior. Basically, one can identify several major topics (islands of knowledge) around which to begin an exploration of the subject: the importance of ethical role modeling, the problem of varying perceptions of whose behavior is ethical and whose behavior is not ethical, the influence of others' expectations, and the importance of the reward and punishment structure.

The Importance of Role Modeling

The role modeling of one's superiors seems to be an important influence on subordinates' behavior. Indeed, social learning theory supports this contention. Bandura's extensive research (see Bandura, 1971) points out that human behavior is molded, to a large degree, by exposure to social models. In fact, continual exposure to a behaviorally consistent modeling influence promotes behavioral change, emotional responsiveness, similar valuation of objects, and even changes in self-evaluation. Bandura and Katz and Kahn (1966) stress the potential positive modeling impact of high-status models--those high in prestige, power, competence, and intelligence--for example, a highly visible top-level leader. Argyris (1964) further explains the modeling influence of the superior, described by him as the "gatekeeper" to the success of the subordinate: subordinates who desire to get through the gate, realize that they have to discover the criteria that are required to open the gate to promotion. These criteria include technical job demands, objectively defined, and the superior's view of the subordinate's loyalty, commitment, cooperative spirit, and attitudes, all subjectively defined. Conformity and dependence result from identification with the leader:

In order to "play it safe" and increase as much as possible their chances for promotion, the subordinates will tend to become leader centered. What is he worried about? What are his prejudices, values, dislikes? In short, there is a built-in tendency for dependence on the leader and conformity to his wishes. (pp. 103-104)

The results from two surveys highlight the apparent importance of role modeling. Baumhart (1961) and Brenner and Molander, in a replication (1977), were interested in ascertaining managers' attitudes about business ethics. They asked for a ranking of five factors or influences on both ethical and unethical behavior (1 = most influential, 5 = least influential on the response scale). In 1961, the behavior of one's superiors in the organization was the second most highly ranked influence (rank = 2.8) on behavior promoting ethical decisions (the highest ranking influence was one's personal code of ethics, rank = 1.5). The ethical behavior of one's superiors is especially important because it is simultaneously a factor influencing subordinates' ethical behavior and discouraging their unethical conduct (the unethical behavior of one's superiors was the highest ranked factor influencing unethical decision making, rank = 1.9). In addition, peers' behavior was seen as more influential if it was unethical (rank = 3.1) than if it was ethical (rank = 4.0). Thus, unethical behavior on the part of both peers and superiors is a factor in promoting unethical behavior, whereas evidence of ethical behavior is a powerful inhibitor of unethical behavior. A comparison of the factors influencing unethical behavior between 1961 and 1977 shows that the behavior of one's superiors remained the most influential factor (rank = 2.15). The three factors contributing most to ethical behavior reported in the 1977 study are the adverse impact of public disclosure, heightened public awareness about business ethics, and increased governmental regulations. These factors lend credence to the notion that public opinion is a highly weighted influence on ethical conduct in an organization.

Baumhart thus found that the executive's own set of values enabling resistance to pressure and temptation, formal company policy about acceptable and unacceptable practices, and the behavior of one's superiors were the factors most conducive to ethical behavior. The tendency to accept the values of one's superiors, he stated, existed in every age group, at every management level, and in every company function. One's superiors were crucial role models: "Executives say that the man most likely to act ethically is one with a well-defined personal code. If he also has a boss who is highly ethical, his behavior will be consistently upright" (p. 7). But Baumhart offered a qualifier: reducing the frequency of unethical conduct takes top management's initiative: "The men at the top must be individuals of

principle, who unmistakably reveal their ethical attitude, not only verbally, but also by forceful action" (p. 7).

Two military studies provide additional support for the importance of role modeling by superiors. The U.S. Army War College Study on Military Professionalism (1970) reported that many of the systemic pressures tempting junior officers to accomplish a task were seen as the result of techniques and policies either initiated or condoned by senior officers. The study concluded that,

taken as a whole, particularly in light of the qualitative inputs (questionnaires, narratives, interviews, seminar discussions) which described the constraints within which the junior officer is placed and the pressures imposed upon him by his seniors, the responsibility for systematic defects shifted consistently toward the senior officers--the lieutenant colonels and above. (p. B-44)

Noting that senior officers have greater leverage of power and visibility--consequently, naturally finding themselves cast in the role of behavioral models--the study highlighted certain negative behaviors as especially detrimental, particularly when displayed by middle- and upper-level officers: showing little respect for people, demonstrating low moral standards, drunkenness, failing to correct unethical or inappropriate behavior on the part of others, failing to support subordinates, and preoccupation with post-retirement careers. The solution recommended by 222 of 415 respondents was "increased emphasis and attention on the part of senior officers" (i.e., role modeling). The negative behaviors mentioned above may suggest an operant value system as held by senior officers. Certainly, defining the actual value system operating in the organization would help to illuminate sources of unethical conduct.

The second military study (Drisko, 1977) posited a similar emphasis on the positive value of ethical role modeling, especially at the higher levels:

To be credible, emphasis on ethical conduct in the officer corps must start at the top. Leaders at all levels must set the example. Anything less will only increase the cynicism which already exists in the officer ranks in the perception of the "Do as I say, not as I do" syndrome. (p. 40)

A code of ethics and consistent role modeling inform subordinates of what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable. Once people realize that unethical conduct--both on individual and organizational levels--can seriously harm the organization's functioning as well as its reputation, they can cooperate to develop the framework for an ethical group consciousness. For example, organizational leaders can provide some functional criteria by which subordinates will be able to appraise the ethical implications of their behavior in a given situation. Subordinates can be encouraged to ask themselves constantly if their behavior would be acceptable to others if others were aware of it, and what the likely consequences of such behavior would be. But the solution to the problem of unethical conduct cannot be so easily derived, regardless of how logical it seems. The fact is that the problem is more complicated than one might presume. One of the problems is that individuals at different organizational levels have varying perceptions of the ethical behavior of those at other levels.

Differences in Perceptions of the Problem

Respondents to survey questions generally report less confidence in others' propensity to act ethically. Clearly, a discrepancy exists between self-perceptions and the perceptions of others' intentions. For example, Baumhart (1961) concluded that respondents were cynical about the behavior of the "average" executive and, therefore, found it difficult to identify with the typical executive. These respondents believed that others would violate a code of ethics if they could avoid detection. In general, respondents report their own behavior as quite ethical but the behavior of others as less ethical. Baumhart, and Brenner and Molander (1977) reported that one's peers were seen as the least ethical group. The Army War College study (1970) reported subordinates as the least ethical in the eyes of respondents. Newstrom and Ruch (1975), "The Pressure to Compromise" (1977), and Drisko (1977) all reported the perception that one's superiors' ethical behavior was questionable. Part of the discrepancy in perceptions is due to serious methodological shortcomings evident in the majority of research attempts to date. Nevertheless, the fact that varying perceptions exist is a finding deserving further analysis. It may be that leaders think they are behaving ethically but that others (e.g., peers, subordinates) do not perceive their actions as ethical. The suggestions that people may be blind to their own behavior, or that they receive no feedback about others' perceptions of their behavior merit study. Clearly, it seems necessary to emphasize self-scrutiny to a greater degree.

Restrictions on Behavior by Organizational Level

In an earlier monograph (Clement and Ayres, 1976), the authors emphasized that the need for self-scrutiny increases as a leader or manager is promoted in rank. The higher one's position, the more visible an organizational representative that person is. Because of this visibility, individuals find the constraints on their behavior to increase with each promotion; the higher one's level, the more he or she is expected to conform to a behavioral stereotype. Whether or not top-level leaders like it, they have very little private life at the top. Along with the perquisites of position come more stringent expectations to "set an example," probably off the job as well as on. People who cannot, or who refuse, to accept the force of these expectations probably should not accept promotions. Very rarely, however, is it made clear that one's behavior is increasingly delimited once he or she reaches the middle-management levels. Although a second lieutenant may not be reprimanded for a given questionable behavior, the major will find it more difficult to engage in this behavior, and certainly, the general officer will probably find it impossible to do certain things. The professional image implied in a leadership position circumscribes the latitude of behavior that is considered permissible. Unfortunately, organizational leaders rarely acknowledge that the degree of latitude will decrease the higher one's position in the organization. Organizational norms may subtly communicate this notion, but it is necessary that such expectations be expressed overtly. In this way, the individual will be able to exercise more freedom of choice because behavioral expectations will not come as a surprise when it is too late.

The Influence of Expectations on Ethical Conduct

The role model of a leader implies a set of expectations held by others that the incumbent in a leadership position will carry out the duties of that position in an acceptable manner. The subject of expectations applies on two interrelated levels. First of all, the leader is expected by others to behave ethically and responsibly, both personally and professionally, i.e., to set an example at all times. But a second set of expectations flows downward, influencing ethical conduct: perceptions by subordinates of how they believe their superiors expect them to behave. Buchanan (1974), in a study of organizational commitment, found that the most influential initial experiences were those informing the "recruit" of what is expected of him or her. Commitment, said Buchanan, is partly a function of identification with the organization: a recruit's mild anxiety over the ability to live up to others' expectations prompts the recruit to identify with and become attached to significant others. In fact, interaction with vet-

organ managers is the principal means by which recruits absorb the subtleties of organizational culture and climate.

Berlew and Hall (1966-67) agreed with Buchanan:

From the moment he enters the organization, a new manager is given cues about the quality of performance that is expected and rewarded. The probability that these expectations and standards will be internalized is probably higher when the individual has just joined the organization and is searching for some definition of the reality of his new environment. (p. 210)

Similarly, Ways (1974) contended that one's conduct is partly influenced by how the person perceives he or she is expected to act. Expectations of how one is supposed to behave serve partly as a basis for interpreting situations and act as a source of pressure for directing behavior.

The literature suggests that unrealistic or inaccurate expectations contribute to unethical behavior. A common perception appears to be the expectation that business needs must take priority over personal ethics. In a survey at Pitney-Bowes ("The Pressure to Compromise," 1977) researchers found that 59% of 326 managers questioned felt pressured to compromise personal ethics to achieve corporate goals; 79% of lower-level managers reported the same perception. The results of a similar survey at Uniroyal ("The Pressure to Compromise," 1977) showed that 70% of 252 respondents reported the existence of pressures to conform. At Pitney-Bowes, 68% agreed that younger managers automatically go along with their superiors to show loyalty; 76% of Uniroyal respondents agreed with this statement. Congruent findings were reported by Carroll (1975): overall, 64.4% of 798 subjects agreed that managers today feel under pressure to compromise personal standards to achieve company goals; an analysis by organizational level showed that 65% of middle-level managers agreed and 84% of lower-level managers concurred.

These findings strongly suggest that the greatest pressure to compromise is perceived by the lower levels in the managerial hierarchy. In fact, Carroll reported that 78.2% of his sample agreed that the person down the line would compromise because of pressure from the top to achieve results. For the total group, 59.3% agreed that young managers would go along with their superiors' requests out of loyalty; by organizational level, 63% of top-level managers agreed, 61% of mid-level managers agreed, and 85% of lower-level managers concurred.

Baumhart (1961) and Brenner and Molander (1977) reported pressure from superiors as a special source of stress. About 75% of Baumhart's sample of respondents ($N = 1,700$) reported experiencing conflict between what was expected of them as an ethical person and what was expected of them as a business manager. Brenner and Molander found that four out of seven respondents ($N = 1,227$) perceived such a conflict. Indeed, if the expectations of superiors have such a powerful effect upon behavior, it behooves top-level leaders to discover the kinds of expectations being projected downward by them, especially onto those at the lower levels.

The Importance of Rewards and Punishments

There are several ways for subordinates to clarify expectations; for example, they can ask superiors directly what is expected, or they can assess those behaviors that are rewarded and punished. If one considers the psychological climate of the organization as a set of expectations set by top management and manifested in their behaviors, statements, and policies, then one can measure the impact of organizational climate on individual behavior by studying consistencies and inconsistencies in the distribution of both tangible and symbolic rewards and punishments. Such a study is warranted because the exercise of individual conscience can be paralyzed by frustration arising from situations where ethical actions are penalized or ignored, and where unethical actions are rewarded directly or indirectly by not being punished.

The U.S. Army War College study (1970) indicated clearly that problems existed in the reward and punishment system in the U.S. Army. The complaint of varying standards (e.g., unequal and unrealistic workload) was ranked 5th, acceptance of substandard performance (e.g., tolerating mediocrity), was ranked 7th, and the Army system of rewards (e.g., rewarding short-term results at the expense of long-term development in human values; giving out important awards without justification; failing to punish offenders for obvious and serious violation of standards) was ranked 8th on a list of 11 themes of divergence from ideal standards. In addition, unconditional loyalty to one's boss was cited as a cause by 108 out of 415 respondents. The second most common solution to eradicating varying standards (proposed by 200 out of 415 respondents) dealt with the reward system, specifically performance evaluations, promotion, assignment, selection for schooling decisions, and awards and decorations. The study published the following conclusion:

Many senior officers disregard regulations and directives while demanding strict compliance by the

lower grades. Most frequently mentioned was the perception that the higher the officer's grade, the greater the probability he will not receive punishment. The "can do" commander, eager to please the boss, rather than do what is required for the unit, begins and sustains the upward spiral of unequal, unrealistic workload and reward. (p. B-29)

Those factors attributed by the study as sources for the discrepancy between ideal and actual standards further define this reward and punishment system, suggesting, in turn, the value system held by leaders at the top levels: prohibitions on committing any errors, subjective promotion criteria, pressures for perfect reports, overemphasis on loyalty to superiors, unrealistic goals and quotas, the necessity for select assignments, instability in job assignments, a requirement for expertise in too many areas, inadequate counseling, and poor personal examples as set by superiors (e.g., a lack of self-discipline and moral courage, failure to take responsibility for one's actions).

Drisko (1977) also commented on the reward and punishment system in the Army. Nearly 30% of his sample of 2,215 respondents believed that unethical behavior was moderately often to usually rewarded by the organization, whereas 63% believed that being ethical and candid ("telling it like it is") was moderately often to usually unrewarded. Cited as specific problem areas were several endemic syndromes ("cover up to look good," "can do, will do," and "zero defects"), a penchant to tell superiors what they want to hear, pressure on junior officers, career survival needs, inflated performance ratings, and no freedom to fail. Like the 1970 study on professionalism, this study described how unrealistic or confusing expectations can produce high levels of frustration or cynicism, as well as overeagerness to please and to show loyalty to superiors. The result may be an inclination toward unethical practices as both coping and survival responses.

Section Four

Tackling the Problem

Perceived Sources of the Problem

Many observers ascribe the ethical problems arising in organizations to external sources. A frequent explanation is a general decline in standards and values in the society at large: many critics fault a growing and pervasive national emphasis on materialism for fostering human greed and for discouraging commitment to traditional Judeo-Christian values and the worth of intrinsic satisfaction from the Puritan work ethic. Other researchers focus on internal pressures such as a conflict of interest situations, which provide both plentiful opportunities and irresistible pressures--overwhelming temptations--for unethical conduct. Several commentators cite communication problems as the source of the problem: (a) the inability of information to flow freely though the chain of command hierarchy, thus isolating top leadership from organizational realities and producing unrealistic expectations from them; (b) few rewards for honesty in communication, thus promoting the tendencies to alter facts and to withhold information; (c) the perception of subordinates that their superiors discourage negative feedback; and (d) a hesitancy on the part of subordinates to ask their superiors for clarification and additional guidance (for a more detailed discussion, see Clement, 1973).

An analysis of the literature highlights two problems: (a) the subject of ethics in an organization is a topical issue researched more by casual surveys of individual attitudes and opinions than by deliberate empirical study; and (b) those factors considered as causes of unethical conduct in an organizational setting are also proposed as symptoms of the problem. One way to obviate this predicament is to consider approaches to rectifying unethical conduct.

Tackling Public Criticism

The first instinct on the part of those institutions seeking to protect themselves from recrimination is to seek public approval. A way to gain approval is to increase credibility; and one way to do this is to preach honesty and sincerity. American business is presently employing this tactic in a massive advertising campaign advoca-

ting that the majority of organizations are honest and that free enterprise is good for America. Under banners reading "Profits are for People" (Allied Chemical Corporation), "We're Involved" (U.S. Steel), "Straight Talk from Bob Sherer" (president, Georgia Power Company), and "A code of ethics isn't something you post on the bulletin board. It's something you live everyday" (Pennwalt Corporation), many companies are now spending a great deal of time involved in such nontraditional activities as consumer and environmental affairs, media relations, and local community and governmental causes. In a move designed to counter the onslaught of criticism, organizations are trying to get the message across that they indeed are contributing much to American life and that they are concerned about their ethical image. Business also is moving forcefully to clean up its own house by reexamining internal procedures, by calling for special audits, by asking for expense accountings from top management, and by establishing codes of conduct. Some of the image transformation is focusing on a massive public relations campaign in which company spokesmen are sent out to respond to their critics. For example, Georgia Power Company has an in-house speaker's bureau and trains its managers to give appropriate retorts to hecklers. Gulf Oil Company puts its managers through a role-playing exercise called "crisisport" in which they are subjected to tough press questioning after a hypothetical plant catastrophe. In similar fashion, Shell Oil Company encourages its managers to travel the speech circuit.

Many companies are instituting genuine reform by drawing up codes of ethics and toughening up those that already exist on paper. Topping the list of "don'ts" are conflict of interest, reciprocity, antitrust violations, insider-trading practices, and political violations. Exxon's blunt and succinct statement says that they do not want liars for managers. In other cases, executives are being asked to sign affidavits of ethical compliance and are given clearcut responsibility for assuring that employees honor the code. Some companies are firing outright those who have not lived up to the standards. A few companies are even prosecuting corrupt employees.

Codes of Ethics

Codes of ethics are seen as a viable solution to the problem. Codes of ethics, like bylaws, administrative regulations, licensing rules, and statutes, attempt to control individual and group behavior and to clarify the contractual relations between professionals and their clients, among professionals themselves, and between the professional group and society. They also indicate to the society that the profession is serious about protecting the public from charlatanism. Several writers contend that codes can change behavior. Proponents of codes cite their value as internal communication devices capable of

articulating organizational values; or as control mechanisms for reinforcing these values; or even as public relations instruments to inform the public of an organization's commitment to ethical conduct. Opponents criticize codes because (a) they tend to be hortatory in tone (full of "thou shalt nots")--thus externally imposed and prescriptive; (b) they vaguely define acceptable standards because they have to be watered down to gain general acceptance; and (c) they serve as disincentives to behave ethically because they fail to foster a positive sense of duty and responsibility. In addition, insincerity on the part of superiors who espouse a code's values but do not behaviorally conform to its guidelines is a sign of hypocrisy, which produces an additional disincentive. Ideally, a code should be an internal incentive, appeal to one's sense of professionalism, and be affirmative in tone, basically "thou shalts." Although most people do favor a code (see Baumhart, 1961; Brenner & Molander, 1977; Drisko, 1977), the problem remains that most codes of ethics are difficult to put into operation because they tend to be neither behaviorally detailed enough nor consistently enforced. It seems that the issue of organizational ethics is complicated beyond the ability of codes to resolve unilaterally the problem of unethical conduct in organizations. Perhaps this is because codes, for the most part, attempt externally to produce changed behavior.

Enforcement of codes is crucial but not guaranteed by their mere existence. Instead of acting swiftly to punish transgressors, enforcement bodies of organizations and professions may respond to unethical acts by creating an internal veil of silence that functions to shield serious infractions from external attention. Unfortunately, individuals who are aware of incidents of carelessness or flagrant incompetence on the part of colleagues are frequently reluctant to criticize their malpracticing associates and thus refrain from reporting such cases to their superiors or officials of regulatory bodies and licensing agencies. As a result, existing disciplinary bodies remain weak and ineffectual. Not only do self-policing apparatuses not function effectively, but they also tend to protect professional perquisites. It is not unusual to find regulatory bodies responding more quickly to threats to professionals' income (fee ranges) than to situations involving corruption and conflict of interest. It is also not uncommon that the incompetent or unscrupulous person is asked to resign rather than be subjected to humiliating examination and punishment.

Although reluctance to expose incompetence is common, it is blatantly unethical according to the precepts of many professional codes of ethics. For example, the American Medical Association's Principles of Ethics state that a "physician should expose, without fear or favor, incompetent or corrupt, dishonest or unethical conduct on the part of members of the profession." The doctor who does not report incompetency, corruption, dishonesty, or unethical conduct is also

acting unethically. Perhaps what is called for is greater support of those who do step forward to report ethical misconduct. Ideally, the objective is to create a situation in which people are encouraged to act judiciously. The point is to reward conscientious technical and ethical practice within a system that can identify and deal with problems on the spot.

Businessmen are pragmatic enough to realize their responsibility to meet society's expectations. As Frank T. Carey, Chairman of IBM, expressed the responsibility,

When some businesses turn out shoddy products or engage in misleading advertising or ignore customer complaints, the public gets sour on business as a whole. When some executives have to admit that they bribed foreign officials or illegally channeled corporate funds into political campaigns, the public believes this is standard business conduct. And when we read in the newspapers about corporate kickbacks and secret Swiss bank accounts, all business suffers.

Some businesses have tried to excuse themselves by saying that everybody does it. Well, everybody doesn't do it....

The time has come for those of us in business to put our house in order...to restore the faith of Americans in the basic competence and purpose of business. And this requires a lot more than public relations efforts. ("The Embattled Businessman," p. 59)

A figure much in the news today is Secretary of the Treasury and former chairman of the Bendix Corporation, W. Michael Blumenthal. As a prominent executive, he gained a reputation as a determined advocate of corporate responsibility and as someone who expressed a progressive attitude about industry's responsibility to contribute to the social good. Blumenthal is known to have chided his bribe-paying business colleagues in private. In addition, he is a fervent spokesman for a corporate code of ethics: as early as January, 1975 he proposed establishing a professional watchdog group that would devise and police an ethical code for American businessmen. An article about him, which appeared in the Wall Street Journal (Brown, 1975), described Blumenthal as "one of a small though growing number of corporate leaders who

seem willing to plunge voluntarily into the nebulous area of the social and moral responsibilities of big business....Mr. Blumenthal himself contends that the stakes in the growing debate over business ethics are nothing short of corporate survival" (p.1).

Improving the Ethical Value System Requires Top Level Responsibility

The willingness of military leaders to accept responsibility for shaping values does not end with the enthusiasm to take action. Shaping values requires not only reform of codes and standards but also policy changes and attention to the work environment. It is insufficient--if not decidedly unwise and probably unfair--to raise expectations when the concomitant changes that would allow individuals to meet these expectations will not be made. For instance, to speak of policy reform without taking into consideration how the environment impacts upon adherence to policy is to be shortsighted, perhaps even to invite disaster. Undoubtedly, the greatest reinforcement for ethical conduct is the actual work or field climate. Establishing sanctions to be imposed for ethical transgressions without in turn setting up the mechanisms to enforce these sanctions will certainly result in frustration, since it is likely that the sanctions will become ineffectual. Likewise, to voice support for standards and then to not follow through with appropriate punishment of those who disobey the standards will also produce frustration and cynicism. The fact is that improvements in the Army's ethical standards and adherence to them call for systemic changes, substantial risk-taking, and responsibility for follow-up action.

Perhaps the most critical requirement for effecting change is to ensure that leaders' behaviors support the values and ideals they espouse. The previous discussion has indicated that support must come from leaders at the top levels who serve as role models and who thereby subject their behavior to critical scrutiny. But articulating a code and behaviorally supporting it are not enough. Leaders must concurrently establish a climate within which such a value system can flourish. This implies investigating how certain policies, rules, regulations, and procedures interrelate, as well as eliminating redundancies, inconsistencies, and contradictions.

The matter is not reducible to merely clarifying policy, however. Improving the state of ethics in the Army requires that the institution develop an atmosphere of trust--trust in an individual's ability to behave ethically. But trust is impossible to develop without risk. Leaders have to take the risk that an individual will occasionally choose to behave unethically. The point is simply that the opportunity must be present for one to make a choice between acting ethically and acting unethically. Of course, those who abuse the institution's

trust in their ability and desire to behave ethically need to be quickly and appropriately penalized.

If it hopes to foster an atmosphere of trust, the organization must rid itself of policies and procedures that inhibit the development of trust. Although policy changes can do much to alleviate inconsistencies which obviate an ethical climate, effecting such changes by no means guarantees that changes in ethical beliefs and practices will result. Change will take time. An individual cannot be trained to be ethical. Rather, one's ethical sensibility will grow as a consequence of positive encouragement, plentiful opportunities to display ethical behavior, and a reward system that reinforces ethical responsibility. Developing an organizational ethical sensibility is an effort demanding concerted and continual action.

Section Five

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

The Need for Empirical Research

The fact that unethical behavior continues to persist in organizational settings indicates that ethical behavior cannot be guaranteed by the mere existence of controls such as published codes of ethics, rules, regulations, laws or proscriptions. The reasons why an individual or a group of people behaves unethically are not clear. Although there has been a great deal of interest in individual and organizational standards of ethical conduct, especially reasons for persistent ethical problems, there has been little systematic and empirically based study of why people behave unethically. As Korman, Greenhaus, and Badin (1977) stated:

There has been little interest that we can see in the seamier aspects of organizational life. Society has looked at and continues to examine the ethical behavior of executives, bribery of government officials, and employee thefts of all kinds. Where is our (social scientists') contribution to this examination? Why do people cheat, bribe, and steal in organizations? What kinds of organizational environments generate such behaviors? Why do we accept these behaviors? (p 191)

Typical Research Approaches

To find out why people behave unethically, researchers typically focus upon the individual for clues as to the values, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations that give rise to unethical conduct. Theologians, philosophers, and ethicists concentrate upon a person's subjective values as predictors of behaviors because they believe that one's values and one's behavior are intimately linked to the point where values incite behavior. For instance, Rokeach (1973) considers a value as "an intervening variable that leads to action when activated" (p. 7). What he calls instrumental values refers to mode of conduct. Similarly England (1975) defines values as "a relatively permanent perceptual framework which shapes and influences the general nature of

an individual's behavior" (p. 54). Those who firmly believe that we can gain insight into why people behave unethically treat values as the independent variable or predictor and behavior (be it ethical or unethical) as the dependent variable or criterion that is to be assessed.

Social psychologists prefer to measure a person's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions because values tend to be so subjective and inferential, whereas attitudes have been found to be more reliable from a measurement standpoint. Nevertheless, they too regard attitudes as predictors of behavior. For example, Cohen (1964) acknowledged that "attitudes are always seen as precursors of behavior, as determinants of how a person will actually behave in his daily affairs" (p. 138). Guilford (1954) viewed beliefs and opinions in much the same vein as determinants of behavior.

Industrial and organizational psychologists have focused on motivation as an explanation of behavior. Here we find such theories as valence-expectancy-instrumentality theory, cognitive dissonance theory, need theory, equity theory, need achievement theory, and attribution theory. But they also fail to explain behavior in every situation. (For a discussion and review of these theories, see Campbell & Pritchard, 1976.)

Research Problems

In all of the above approaches, the assumption is that there is something intrinsic in people that activates them to behave in a specified manner. And, in most of the theories, the prediction model involves examining a single independent variable (i.e., a value or attitude set) and a single dependent variable (behavior set). Both the independent and dependent variables are general in nature. The values variable is abstract and global; attitudes, beliefs, and opinions tend to be more concrete but are still not focused on a specific situation. Regarding the dependent variable, attention is given to the full range of ethical/unethical behaviors across situations. Measurement of each variable is obtained by a single method. The prediction model, then, encompasses a single and global predictor for a single and general criterion.

Unfortunately, as Pittle and Mendlesohn (1966) have pointed out, this prediction model is too simplistic to explain the complex relationship between determinants of behavior and actual subsequent behavior. The values-behavior and attitude-behavior relationships have not held up well; one's values and attitudes neither necessarily, consistently, nor adequately determine one's behavior in every situa-

tion. Empirical research on the relationship of attitudes to behavior has revealed discrepancies so frequently, in fact, that conclusions about the determinants of behavior cannot be drawn from an approach focusing upon values, attitudes, opinions or beliefs as determinants of unethical behavior. As Schwartz and Tessler (1972) stated, "overt behavior is influenced by a multitude of factors in addition to the particular attitudes of interest to the observer--opportunities, abilities, personality, and demographic characteristics, norms, conflicting attitudes, etc." (p. 225).

Fishbein and Ajzen (1972) have summarized the problem as "a great deal of conceptual ambiguities and methodological deficiencies." Part of the conceptual problem is due to imprecise definitions: terms such as "values," "ethics," "standards," "attitudes," "morals," and "beliefs" are used interchangeably as if they were synonymous when perhaps they are not. Imprecise terminology and unclear definitions lead to ambiguous meanings and varying interpretations of moral and ethical concepts. This terminological confusion is creating research difficulties. Interest in unethical behavior has ranged from overt and obviously unethical actions to covert and ambiguous acts that are difficult to define behaviorally. As a result, we do not have a clear idea about what to refer to when we speak of the ethical/unethical realm of organizationally relevant behaviors. Consequently, it has become difficult to construct a continuum along which the range of unethical acts can be listed. Partly, the difficulty is due to the fact that the distinction between what is considered ethical and unethical is both individually and normatively defined. Therefore, we are left to address a set of standards that are highly subjective and specific to a given person or situation. In addition, ethical principles are so hard to operationalize in terms of observable and isolable behaviors that attention has focused by default on the obviously unethical behaviors because of the ease in identifying them, even though the interest has been in the grey areas of unethical behavior, i.e., situations where one person might act ethically and another unethically.

Because of the conceptual confusion that abounds, serious methodological problems are common, thus handicapping research efforts and limiting research findings. A particular problem is related to the criterion. The point of measuring values or attitudes or beliefs is to predict and understand a specific resulting behavior or set of behaviors. Instead of measuring actual behaviors, which are difficult to observe and assess, the criterion (or behavior to be predicted) is usually one person's perception of what another would do in a given situation. There tends to be little validation of these perceptions of another's beliefs and behaviors with their actual beliefs and behaviors. For example, in one study the beliefs and likely behaviors of top-level managers were ascertained by asking middle-level managers what they thought top management believed and would do in certain

situations. The researchers never asked top management the same questions but instead relied upon the perceptions of those at the middle levels as projected onto managers at the upper levels. Very likely, inferences about top management beliefs and behaviors were biased at the least and incorrect at the most. At a minimum, there is a need to assess the attitudes of incumbents at each organizational level.

Other methodological shortcomings have plagued previous research attempts. Attitudes, values, and beliefs are usually obtained by asking the person to respond to a series of questions on a written questionnaire--a self-report inventory. A particular problem with self-report inventories is that the respondent may report attitudes and beliefs that are thought to be socially desirable; this social desirability response bias is especially evident when questionnaire items deal with a subject that is highly personal, such as ethical beliefs. Yet it has been difficult to establish a better way to examine ethical beliefs. If one acknowledges that behaviors and statements reflect one's values and beliefs, as Barnard (1938) asserted, then perhaps the best measure of a person's ethical beliefs is that person's actions. Focusing upon present behaviors to predict future behaviors may lead to greater success in prediction. At the present, however, we have a problem in measuring predictors because they are difficult to isolate as observable behaviors. Furthermore, we have not clarified the range of behaviors that we are trying to predict because we have not defined the domain of ethical/unethical acts. We do not understand what we should be measuring, and we do not know the best way to measure what we believe we can measure.

In particular, we have not done a good job of sampling. Although there has been much talk about ethical problems in organizations, there has been no sampling of an entire existing managerial hierarchy where span of control can be described in an intact organizational unit. Most sampling has been random, using subjects attending management development seminars or obtained through a mailing survey. Either the focus is at one organizational level or it has encompassed several different organizations. Because of this, many of the assumptions and propositions that imply ethical pressures from the boss or from the job cannot be evaluated. To study ethical behavior in an organization, it seems logical to focus first on a single organization with a well defined leadership chain of command, then to look at like organizations, and finally to study different organizations. This approach would appear to offer more insight into individual predispositions to behave, as well as the interactions of the individual with his/her associates at other levels, and the organization with the surrounding community and larger society. Much sampling is therefore nonrandom and yet conclusions are generalized beyond the sample group to the entire world of management. Such generalizing appears inappropriate.

To summarize the methodological problems characteristic of the available empirical research on ethical and unethical behavior, there is:

- 1) An unclear, idea of what unethical behavior in an organization encompasses, and if ethical behavior is the opposite side of the coin or a separate dimension or domain of behavior. Until the domain(s) is better clarified, we will lack a good conceptual understanding of the subject area or construct called "organizational ethics."
- 2) A belief that we can understand why people behave unethically by examining only forces intrinsic to the individual. Therefore, we tend to concentrate on subjective values, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and intentions as predictors of future behavior. There are influences outside the individual that deserve attention. Clearly, the situation is an important variable.
- 3) Acceptance of global predictors and criteria. We rely on abstract variables: general attitudes toward a set of behaviors, a system of values, a myriad of beliefs and opinions; and we try to predict the full spectrum of unethical intentions. By not looking at a specific and concrete predictor (e.g., attitude) in relation to a specific and concrete criterion (e.g., observable behavior) in a specific context, we are forced to deal with so many assumptions and findings that we often merely muddy our understanding. Perhaps we would benefit more by examining a specific attitude toward a particular act in a particular situation. The more fruitful pursuit may be to begin with a specific focus and progress toward a general perspective instead of the present deductive approach of dealing with generalities to address specifics.
- 4) Inappropriate or inadequate measurement of variables. Values and attitudes are usually measured by a single instrument, and behavior is often assessed by a person's perceptions of likely behavior. Instead, what is needed are multiple measurements of the predictors and multiple measurements of the criterion. A multimethod, multitrait approach as suggested by Campbell and Fiske (1959) is merited. In addition, researchers might have more prediction success with multi-item scales instead of accepting single items as valid measures of variables. Reliability and validity of measurement instruments will be increased by the careful construction and refinement of measuring devices. Convergent and discriminant validity are key issues here.

- 5) Poor scale construction and little or no testing of instruments or scales for reliability and validity. Because of the apparent conceptual confusion about the domain, researchers often neglect to ascertain if the scale they are using to measure ethical attitudes is unidimensional or multidimensional. High internal consistency reliability would indicate that one dimension is being measured. Inclusion of many dimensions or factors on a single scale adds to the conceptual confusion. Furthermore, poor scale construction leads to misinterpretation of data. If we do not know what we are measuring, we cannot expect to obtain valid measurement. In terms of validity, a particular shortcoming is reliance upon people's perceptions as opposed to observable behaviors. As noted previously, however, the difficulty in measuring observable behaviors is pronounced because of the nature of the behavior we are trying to assess. We simply do not expect unethical behavior to occur and therefore will almost always be tardy in measuring it when it does occur.
- 6) Unsophisticated and inappropriate statistical analysis of data. There is widespread acceptance of descriptive statistics and a profound neglect of inferential statistics; perhaps analysis of variance and multivariate statistical analyses are more in order. Reliance upon percentages and averages limits the amount of insight to be gained from the data. As a result, researchers and analysts are forced to deal with incorrect conclusions and inferences, lose valuable information, and do not obtain control over influences that increase the error variance in a nonrandom fashion. The subject is complex; it requires a complex research design, in turn indicating a need for sophisticated analysis of data.

In short, we find much of the literature reflecting poor assessment techniques, a focus on abstractions rather than specific behaviors, inadequate or incorrect scoring procedures and analysis of data, limited sampling of subjects, and a considerable overlap of concepts and terms. Consequently, we have a lack of differentiation among concepts and a construct (ethical behavior in an organizational setting) that is difficult to operationalize. The problem is that we cannot measure something well that we cannot operationally define.

The Need for a Conceptual Framework

Perhaps the problem of defining and measuring unethical predispositions is due to a preoccupation with viewing ethical and unethical behaviors as a function of the individual. We find attention usually

focused on personal characteristics. But situational variables (e.g., norms, consequences, interaction with the boss, peer pressure) may be important moderating variables, if not predictors. It is time to acknowledge that the antecedents or determinants of behavior include group dynamics and contextual variables as well as individual predispositions to behave. Fishbein and his associates (see Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and Schwartz and Tessler (1972) have suggested looking at all possible determinants of behavior and examining specific and more general attitudes. Such determinants include specific attitudes about specific behaviors in particular situations, personal beliefs or general values, social norms, the expectations of others, one's motivation to comply with self- and others' expectations, the consequences that will follow different courses of action, and previous exposure to the particular situation. Each determinant is treated as a separate variable and entered into a regression equation with one's intention to behave serving as the dependent variable or criterion. Also, they contend that problems in obtaining significant predictor-criterion relationships stem from not specifying the behavior to be observed and an inability to get actual measures of subsequent behavior as it occurs in the real world. Thus, they suggest looking at one's behavioral intention (what one says s/he would do in the particular situation) as the criterion; their extensive research indicates that there is a high correlation between one's intention to behave and actual subsequent behavior when the behavior being examined is very specific to a situation. Although observable or overt behavior (ethical or unethical) is the object of our interest, the difficulty in obtaining direct measurement is such that behavioral intentions often have to be substituted as the criterion. By moving away from global assessments of abstract values and general attitudes toward specific attitudes about specific acts, and by looking at identifiable behaviors in distinct situations where a multitude of factors presumed to impact on behavior can be isolated, research findings have revealed a more highly correlated and consistent relationship between factors predisposing one to respond in a given way and actual subsequent behaviors.

Finally, then, the study of ethical/unethical behavior in an organization will benefit from a focus beyond the individual. Triandis (1977) has suggested that researchers in the social and behavioral sciences adopt a systems perspective. In this context, a systems approach means that a researcher would take into account systems of interlocking variables:

- a) the ecological system--physical environment impinging upon the individual;
- b) the sociocultural system--norms, roles, group and societal values that exist outside the individual;

- c) the socialization system--developmental patterns by which the individual has been raised and acculturated; and
- d) the individual system--perceptions, learnings, motivational patterns, and attitudes that connect the individual with the surrounding culture.

Not only is it important to isolate variables within each of these systems and to consider their independent influence on behavior, but it is also helpful to examine the complex relationship among these systems of variables. Such an approach can offer a conceptual framework for the study of ethical/unethical behavior in an organizational setting. It also supports the notion that unethical behavior is viewed better as social behavior than as individual behavior. We want to know more than just a person's predisposition to respond, and we care about more than the similarity between what one person says and actually does. Not only do we want to know why a particular behavior takes place on the individual level, but we want to know also why it becomes rampant and persistent on a group level. Changing behavior in a desired direction will involve a knowledge of individual, group, and organizational phenomena that impact on one's decision to behave ethically or unethically under various circumstances.

Constructing a Conceptual Framework

It should now be clear that empirical study of unethical behavior will likely be furthered by first constructing a conceptual framework within which to organize the many issues, facts, and assumptions about unethical behavior that now exist. This framework will provide a model for continuing research--a construct or paradigm. Without a framework, we will continue to ignore pertinent factors capable of explaining why people behave as they do. It will pay us to examine the situation and such variables as the existing reward/ punishment system, prevailing norms, individual perceptions about both, superior-subordinate interactions, expectations, and perceptions about the payoffs for certain acts. Instead of concentrating solely on individual characteristics exclusive of situational factors, the suggestion is to expand our focus and to accept the true complexity of the inquiry into the reasons for unethical behavior. This will involve an interdisciplinary approach as well as a systems approach. There is merit in studying values development, in focusing on the role of attitudes in shaping and changing behavior, in examining the writings of the great philosophers and theologians, in concentrating on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to respond as determinants of behavior, in exploring dyadic and group processes and group and organizational norms for clues about behavioral antecedents, and in looking at all

kinds of situational demands. When one considers, however, that each of these approaches represents an academic discipline subject to considerable parochialism, it is apparent why extensive theoretical disagreement exists. The inquiry into organizational ethics can be assisted by reviewing the various academic approaches to explaining human behavior for commonalities. We need to consider the nature of human behavior, in particular ethical development, and the influence of the group on individual behavior, and we need as often as possible to gather information from a natural field setting as opposed to a simulated environment to assess the effect of real world exigencies on behavior. Moreover, it is more realistic to expect to change the situation than to presume to remodel individual personalities.

Summary

Lest the reader despair that the study of ethics is complicated beyond the feasibility of examining unethical behavior fruitfully, we suggest that a propitious beginning can be made. Hopefully, this monograph has detailed some of the key issues involved in studying unethical behavior, and in such a manner as to caution against random and hasty research efforts that lack conceptual foundation. Instead, we hope that we have expressed the complexity facing any exploration of ethical and unethical behavior, at the same time suggesting concrete issues and avenues that might prove productive research pursuits. A special problem we face as researchers is the volatile nature of the subject matter: ethics is near and dear to everyone; everyone has an opinion about personal ethics; and unethical behavior involves so much risk-taking vis-a-vis behavioral consequences that empirical study remains somewhat handicapped. Notwithstanding these limitations, the present monograph is the beginning in the continuing exploration into the subjects of professionalism and ethics in the Army.

To recap the most salient discussion presented in this monograph, the following points should be emphasized:

- 1) Shaping and maintaining ethical standards is the leader's, not the chaplain's or staff assistant's, responsibility. Part of the leader's job is to influence positively the ethical beliefs and practices of subordinates.
- 2) Ethical role modeling is critical to maintaining high ethical standards. There appears to be a built-in tendency to depend on and to conform to the wishes of one's boss. In addition, unethical behavior of peers and superiors tends to promote unethical behavior. On the other hand, an active personal

code of ethics seems to enable resistance to pressure and temptation. The contentions are that a tendency exists in every age group and at every level to accept the values of one's superiors, and that managers/leaders subconsciously impose their value system on their subordinates. Leaders serve as a key reference group. In fact, it is asserted that people new to an organization will internalize expectations and standards early by identifying with veteran managers or those perceived to have substantial power and status.

- 3) Proliferation of rules, regulations, and policies can foster or hinder ethical development. Formal organizational policy about acceptable and unacceptable practices helps to clarify expectations about ethical conduct.
- 4) Unrealistic and unclear expectations place pressures on people to behave in a certain way. Expectations from the boss act as pressures on subordinates to conform to his/her wishes. The greatest pressure to compromise and conform is reported by those at the lowest organizational levels. This pressure seems to place subordinates under substantial stress. The desire to please the boss may create a "can do, will do" response and a fear of making mistakes. A philosophy promoting "zero defects" places prohibitions on committing any errors, allows no freedom to fail, and creates pressure for perfect reports. The response to such pressures may be a covering up or alteration of the facts to look good, and an overemphasis on loyalty to superiors that promotes a desire to tell the boss what s/he wants to hear. Unrealistic goals and quotas create additional pressures, along with conflicting expectations among superiors, peers, and subordinates.
- 5) The prevailing reward and punishment system helps to establish organizational norms about what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior and thus has a substantial influence upon ethical behavior. People look for clues about the kind of behavior that is expected and rewarded. Subordinates become confused when rewards are inequitable and inconsistent, when promotion criteria are subjective and performance standards unclear, when certain assignments are preferred over others, when tenure in a position is unstable, and when performance norms are so inflated as to be worthless discriminators. A contradictory reward and punishment system that covertly communicates desired behaviors by rewarding them or by not punishing them, while other behaviors are dismissed as non-utilitarian by being proscribed or ignored, adds to the confusion.

- 6) Ethical responsibilities to set an example and to enforce adherence to behavioral codes vary by organizational level. The higher the position, the more visible the incumbent and therefore the more explicit and forceful the expectations of that person's behavior. Therefore, the higher the level, the stronger the expectation to set an example, probably off the job as well as on. Subordinates are highly critical of superiors who show a lack of self-discipline and moral courage, and who fail to take responsibility for their actions.
- 7) The payoffs for infusing an ethical sensibility in individuals and groups of people are many, e.g., continued professional prestige and status, trust and confidence in the professional's ability to carry out professional duties, autonomy--a lack of external control through regulations and restrictions. The thesis is that there is a direct relationship between the ethical conduct of professionals and the public's image of the profession.
- 8) An interdisciplinary approach likely offers the best avenue for research in organizational ethics.
- 9) The study of unethical behavior in an organizational setting requires an extremely complicated analysis of a multitude of variables encompassing the individual and the situation within a systems framework.

Implications for the Army: Three Important Questions

At this point, the reader may be wondering about the practical implications of the previous discussion on ethics. Some people may dismiss the discussion as typical rhetoric about a long-standing issue that will diminish in importance as soon as a more pressing and tangible issue surfaces. Yet, the fact is that ethical problems persist. That the years between 1970, when the Study on Military Professionalism was published, and 1977, when Lieutenant Colonel Drisko surveyed the ethical climate, did not witness much improvement in the perceived state of ethical affairs in the Army is tantamount to a declaration that ethical concerns are indeed still viable and deserving of serious attention. An official recommendation by a recent secretary of the Army that ethics instruction be added to the military curriculum in the Army schools is also testimony that the Army can expect to be confronted with the need to respond to external and internal pressures to account for, and eliminate, recurrent ethical problems.

Three questions are paramount:

- (1) What is the nature of the problem?
- (2) How did it come about?
- (3) Why does it persist?

To answer these questions, it is helpful to review some of the previous research perspectives. Figure 1 portrays a continuum along which are placed several of the prominent approaches adopted to examine the dimension we call "ethics." The range in perspectives addressing the subject is from the philosophical-metaphysical to the pragmatic. Figure 2 highlights that those approaches at the philosophical end of the continuum address the what question; they inquire about the nature of ethics. How should ethics be defined? What does the domain of ethics constitute? Information produced by this inquiry tends to be abstract, theoretical, and descriptive. As one moves to the pragmatic end of the continuum, one becomes aware that the approach becomes more concrete in perspective and that it focuses on specific "real world" phenomena. Academic disciplines taking a more pragmatic than philosophical focus look at the how and why of ethical behavior. Obviously, to gain a complete understanding of the domain of ethics requires one to be concerned with the entire spectrum from philosophical to pragmatic. To look at only a part of the range is to limit the amount of insight and information one can expect to obtain.

Although the magnitude of considering all pertinent assumptions and findings across the various academic disciplines is awesome, this is not to say that an inquiry cannot begin. The most practical place to begin is to establish the relevance of the inquiry to the Army. This raises a fourth question: Why be concerned about systematically studying ethics?

Why Should We Be Concerned About Studying Ethics?

Hopefully, the section on professionalism (Section Two) has pointed out clearly that there are very real pay-offs for exploring the study of ethics. Perhaps the most important, although least obvious, reason is that if we do not "clean our own house," then we can expect Congress to intervene when it becomes obvious that we are not accepting full responsibility for self-policing. Also, failure to cope with ethical issues eventually will disparage the Army's professional status as a leading American institution. One need only recall the negative publicity about selected military actions during the Vietnam War. Negative publicity can make the Army's recruiting

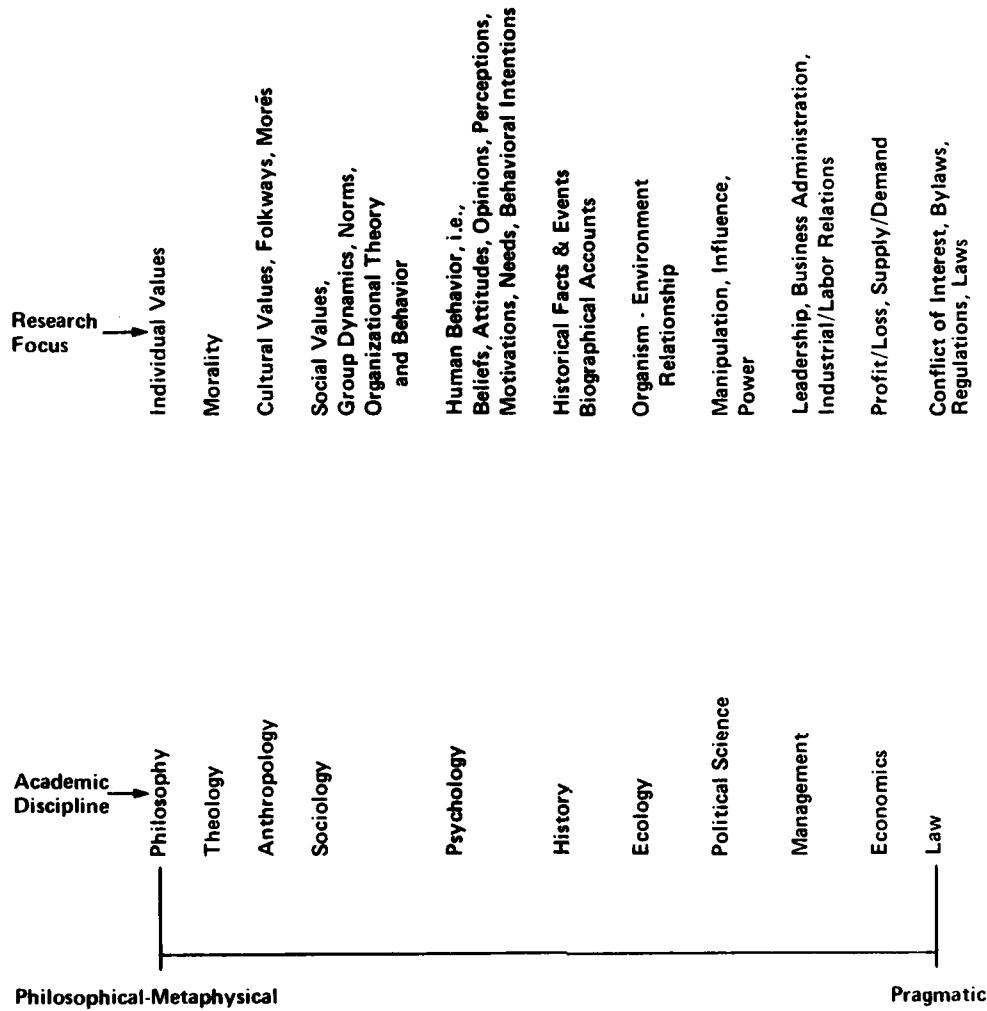


Figure 1. Some Approaches to the Study of Ethics

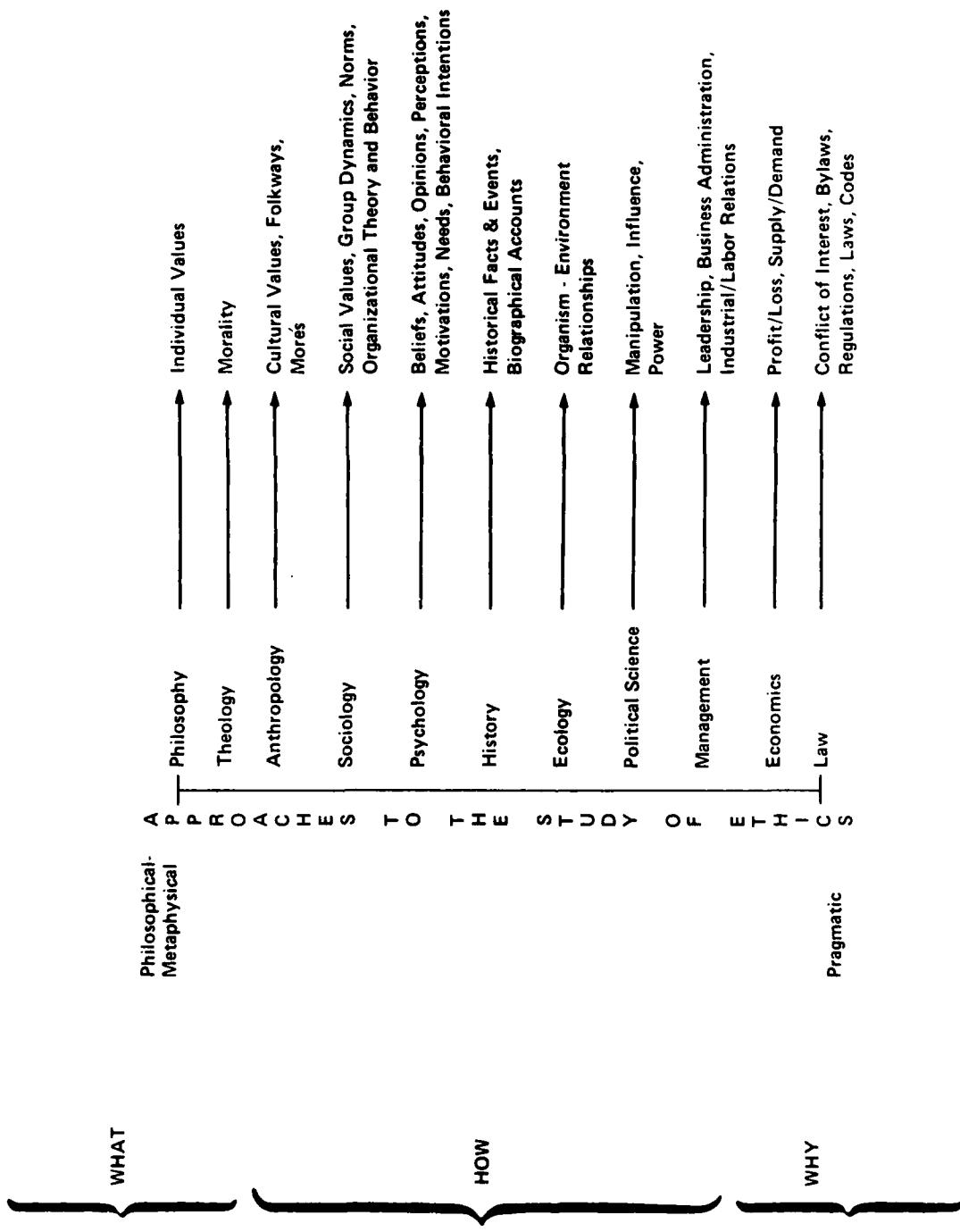


Figure 2. Addressing the **WHAT**, **HOW**, and **WHY** of Ethical Behavior

efforts difficult because military service will not be perceived as an attractive career option. This is an especially relevant issue when conscription cannot be depended upon for recruitment of officers. Not only are there possible negative ramifications for the organization (the Army) as a whole, but there are also unfortunate consequences for individuals as well. It might be hypothesized that working and living in a psychological climate that frustrates or confuses individual ethical responsibility may have a detrimental effect on one's self-esteem and morale over time. Figure 3 describes some hypothesized pay-offs for both the organization and the individual to be gained by emphasizing the importance of ethics.

What Constitutes the Domain of Ethics?

Answering this question is extremely difficult because of the confusion about where the distinction between ethical and unethical actions should be made. Delineating clearly unethical acts is not too troublesome a task because legal, social and religious edicts have been defined to a considerable extent. But there remain numerous behaviors and acts that are not so easily classified according to their ethicality. A special problem we face is the desire to turn to theological writings for direction in clarifying the domain. What we are concerned with, however, are behaviors that fall more in the realm of applied ethics. We are not questioning if behavior is good or bad, right or wrong in an absolute sense, but if it is appropriate or inappropriate in an organizational context. In fact, the line differentiating ethical from unethical behaviors is not a line at all but a rather broad and highly subjective range of behaviors. This "grey area" is characterized by a high degree of ambiguity. Figure 4 suggests what this spectrum of behaviors may resemble. The grey area is somewhat clarified by organizational norms implying acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. For the organization, the predicament is that normative influences may establish undesirable behaviors as acceptable.

The choice of one's behavior pattern is thus partly a function of one's values and partly a function of general situational factors (e.g., the influence of people with the power to reward or punish behavior; expectations of others; norms). It is our contention that the situation and the social environment exert considerable influence over individual and group behavior. This is not to assert that unethical behavior is purely situational and, therefore, that it can be explained, even excused, by situational demands. The complexity of the relationship between individual predispositions to behave and situational influences upon actual behavior should not be underestimated. Figure 5 illustrates the relationship between various determinants of ethical behavior. Some examples may illuminate this relationship.

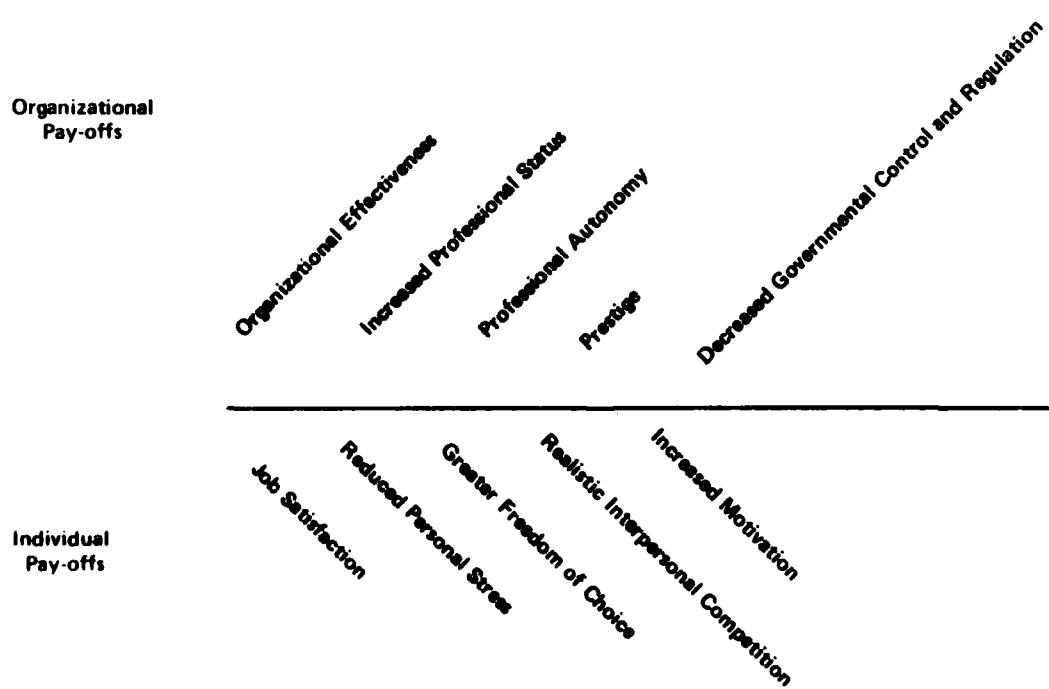


Figure 3. Some Pay-offs for being Ethical

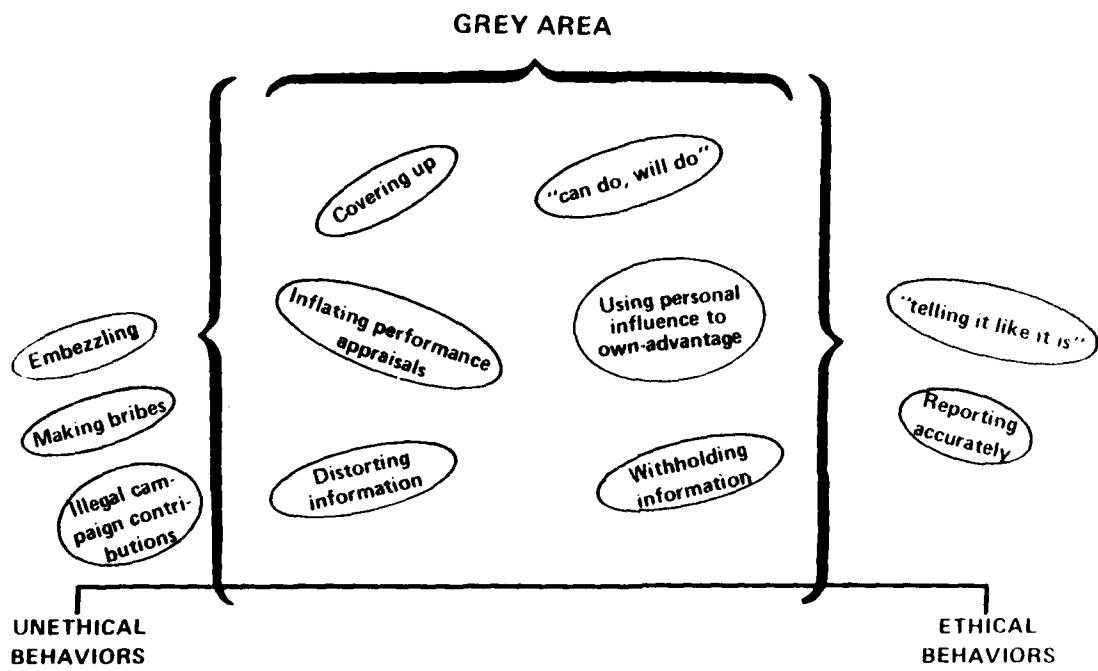


Figure 4. The Range of Behaviors in the Ethical Domain

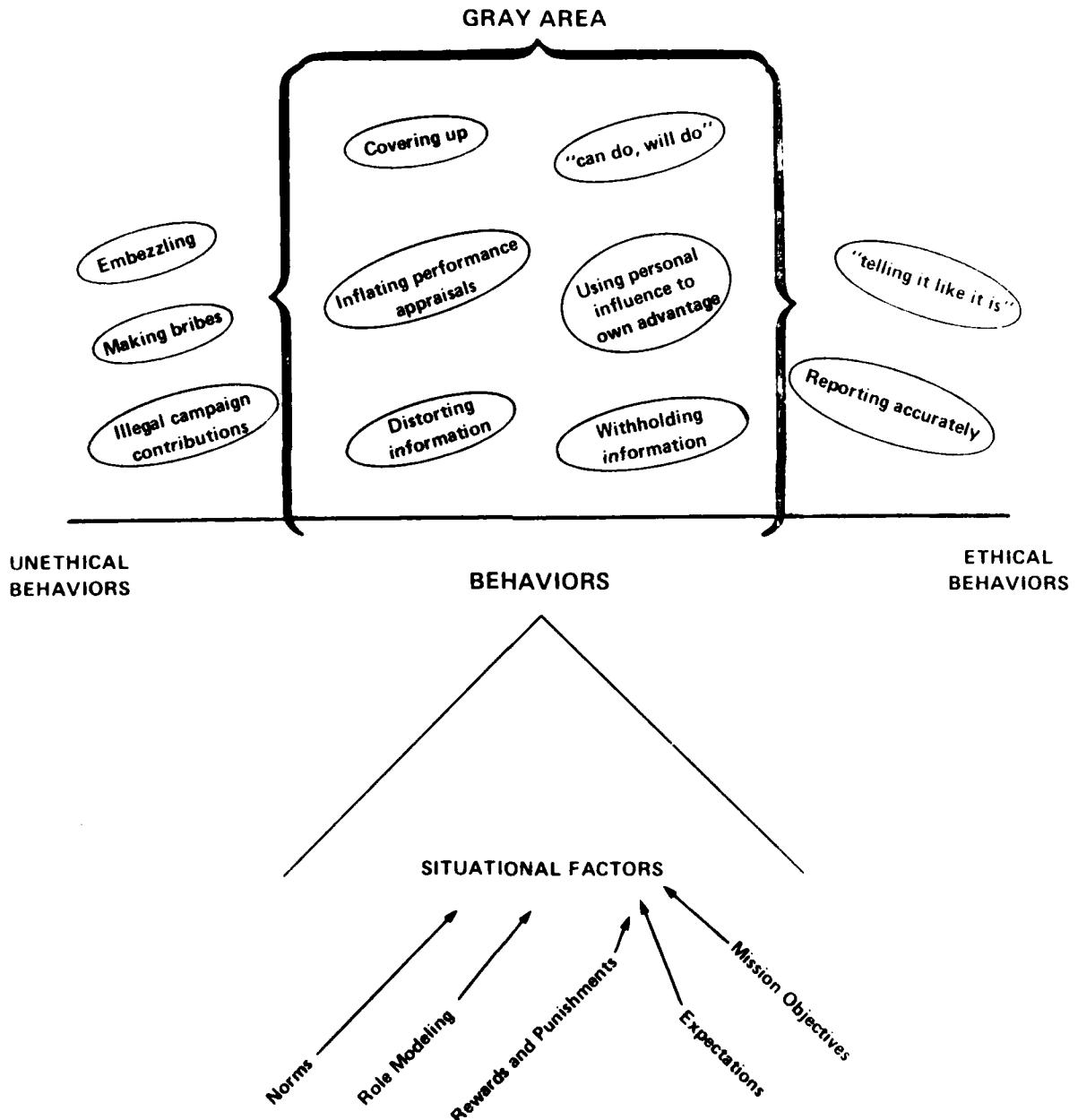


Figure 5. Some Determinants of Ethical Behavior

Unit readiness reporting is an often cited behavior subject to ethical interpretation. Both the 1970 Professionalism study and Drisko's (1977) study highlighted this behavior as a problem area. The predicament is that units are often reported as ready for combat when in fact they are not. Rather than assume that commanders are basically unethical and therefore intentionally report their units as combat ready, perhaps there are situational exigencies inclining one incorrectly to report unit readiness. It seems that the reward and punishment system actually reinforces inaccurate reporting. The operating norm may be "play the game and report your unit as ready so that no questions will be asked by superiors who expect reports of ready status." To expect people to go against existing norms of "acceptable" (albeit unethical) behavior that is rewarded is perhaps overly optimistic.

Another example is distortion of information. Clement (1973) showed that officers frequently distort information unwittingly by selectively omitting negative information in messages they send up to their bosses. To declare that each officer who omits information is consciously acting unethically is to miss the impact of superiors' expectations about the kind of information that is considered desirable. The reasons for such behavior and such expectations are complicated and transcend simplistic explanations. There are many other examples that could be added to such a list, e.g., inaccurately reporting AWOLs on leave, improperly signing out on leave, inflating performance appraisals, recommending undeserving officers for awards, using government property for personal use, falsifying training records. It behooves the Army to examine why such behaviors fall into the grey area. Figure 6 depicts a general approach to such research.

How Should the Army Address the Study of Ethics?

The preceding discussion has argued for a broad perspective regarding the study of unethical behavior that examines the following: 1) the range of ethical/unethical in behaviors in terms of the individual (i.e., individual predispositions to behave as influenced by personal values, attitudes, beliefs, behavioral intentions); 2) the situation (i.e., group norms, others' expectations, systems of rewards and punishments, historical traditions and precedents); and 3) the existing structure of rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and practices (see Figure 7). A strategy, for dealing with the ethical climate in the Army might encompass the following:

- 1) a review of existing Army regulations that inhibit desired ethical practices.

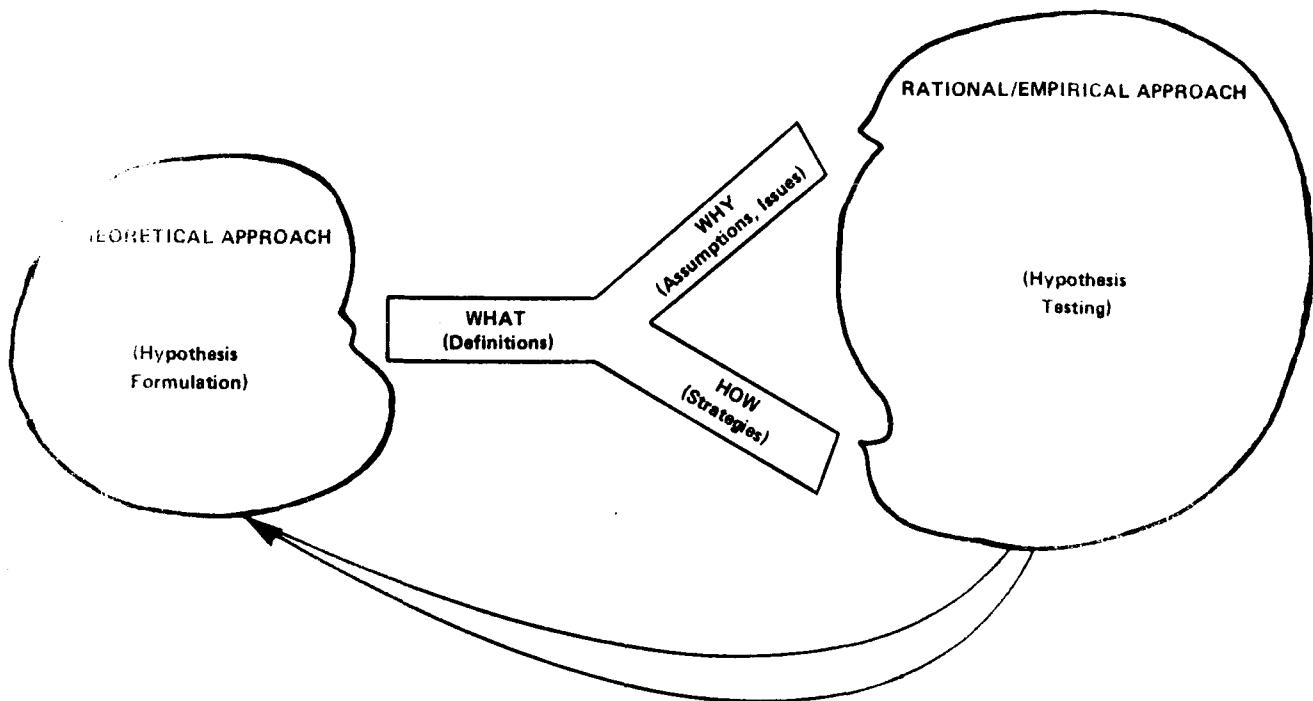


Figure 6. Research Pursuits of the Grey Area

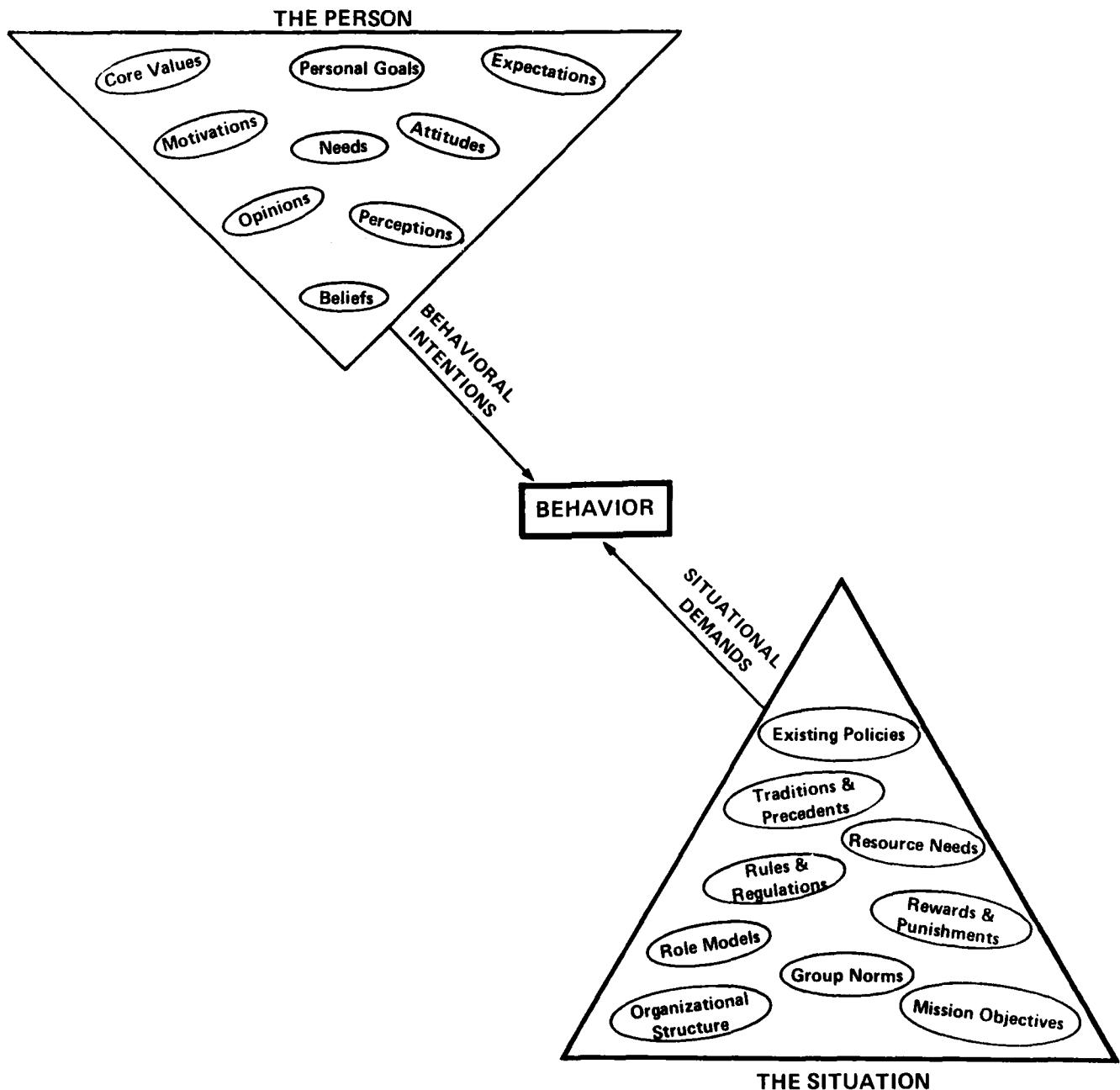


Figure 7. Suggested Behavioral Determinants

- 2) a careful examination of conflicts between the reward and punishment systems.
- 3) a consideration of the differences in the perceptions of ethical problems and their causes by organizational level.
- 4) a realistic appraisal of organizational pressures to preserve the status quo.
- 5) a well-defined explanation of desired standards of ethical behavior that are described in terms of concrete and observable behaviors.

Department of the Army policy regarding ethical standards should be clear, relevant, realistic, and consistent. A description of the organization's desired standards speaks to the kind of profile that denotes a favorable and worthy representative of the organization. Therefore, in establishing policy, Army policymakers might consider what they want the organization's representatives to be communicating to the public about their professional role. An Army officer's professional responsibility is to defend the nation. Officers' defense capabilities are contingent on their credibility as competent, persuasive, and trustworthy people. Evidence of ethical and professional conduct is central to the notion of credibility. In return for reputable conduct, professionals receive high esteem, status, and autonomy. The exchange seems balanced, but the consequence of any disturbance to this balance is a loss of prestige for the professional and a loss of faith in the Army on the part of the public. The imbalance ultimately translates into increased external control and regulation of the organization. Thus, the price for a deviation from the desired equilibrium is a high one to pay, especially considering the important role of the Army in American society.

Improvements in the Army's ethical climate will require systemic and systematic change, a great deal of risk-taking, and responsibility for follow-up action. It is important that behavioral standards about appropriate and inappropriate ethical and professional conduct be articulated, accepted, and promulgated widely. The point is not to create an environment in which behavior is so rigidly controlled that all unethical behavior is predictable and thus nonexistent; rather, it is to foster a climate in which the norm is to behave ethically so that the prevalence of unethical behavior becomes manageable. The objective, then, is to define behavioral expectations in terms of acts and practices both supporting and disparaging the public's trust and confidence in the ability of the Army and its members to carry out their organizational mission vis-a-vis the nation's defense. In this way, people who join the Army will know what is expected of them and how their behavior is limited. The behavioral standards will also serve as an ethical impact criterion for the formulation of policies, doctrine, regulations, procedures, and decisions.

With respect to the issue of training and education, it is important to stress that the subject of ethics should not be dealt with as a skill area. The objective of any educational strategy in the teaching of ethics should be to raise the level of awareness and understanding. Treating ethics as a skill area presumes that ethical behavior can be developed through a short training program. Obviously, this approach is not possible because, like leadership development, ethical development is progressive, occurring over a long period of time. As such, ethical development is not amenable to short skill-building modules. The best curriculum approach is to address the various components of the domain of ethics in the manner of selected readings, discussions, lectures, case studies, and role-playing exercises. Such an approach will be helped by on-going research aimed at clarifying the variables influencing ethical behavior. The research inquiry is directed at describing the influence of accepted practice (e.g., customs, precedence, expectations, norms, group attitudes), existing structures (e.g., the operating system of rewards and punishments), and external controls over behavior (e.g., legal proscriptions, penalties, codes of ethics) vis-a-vis internal factors predisposing a person to respond ethically or unethically. Because of the relative paucity of empirical research, this effort is by no means a simple one. This monograph is offered as a beginning in dealing with this important and complicated organizational issue.

The next section suggests a basic outline for ethics instruction in the TRADOC school system.

Section Six

Recommendations for Instructional Change

No recommendations for the teaching of professional ethics today can be based on hard empirical data. We do not know definitely what the value system of the officer corps is or should be; we do not know definitely what the American society expects; we do not even know whether or not instruction in professional ethics has any impact. Derek Bok, President of Harvard, raised several questions ("Can Ethics Be Taught?", Change, October 1976) regarding the form, content and purpose of ethics instruction. His questions (Who should teach ethics? What purpose does it serve? What approach is appropriate?) were echoed by several authors in the Hastings Center Report of December 1977.

The following recommendations are being proffered contemporaneously with other efforts to answer the above questions. The assumption is that several previous studies (cf. Army War College (AWC) Study on Military Professionalism, 1970) have established the need and suggested the content for instruction. The AWC Study on Military Professionalism seems to conclude that the Army has done an inadequate job in the teaching of professional ethics. Similar conclusions appear to have been reached by more recent studies, most less comprehensive, and there continues to be high interest in improving this instruction. The 1970 AWC Study adequately documented the need for officers' education in ethics. This has been documented more recently by various curriculum review committees on the Military Academy at West Point (USMA) and by the Review of Education and Training of Officers (RETO) study group. It is in the literature on civil-military relations (cf. Vagts, Janowitz and Huntington) where the need for the underlying knowledge of professional status is cited. Earlier sections of this monograph address professionalism generically. This section on ethics education touches upon military professionalism specifically. Future monographs will expand upon this. These recommendations are offered prior to all data being in (it will likely never be) but based on the best judgment and consideration of all the data that is presently available.

Monograph #8, A Matrix of Organizational Leadership Dimensions (1976) and its partial explication, Monograph #9, Organizational Leadership Tasks for Army Leadership Training (1977), are written from the organization's viewpoint. The present educational strategy is written from a similar organizational viewpoint with the same underlying assumptions cited in Monographs 7 (A Professional Model for Leadership Development, 1975) and 8. The requirements of the organization are

for different, though similar, leader behaviors at each ascending organizational level. This section, however, is written prescriptively for the learning required by the individual to assume each ascending level of the organization.

The professional judgment of senior officers appears to be that a vital program of ethics instruction is required. Within any profession this judgment is crucial and pertinent to the socialization of subordinate members. This judgment should therefore be weighted heavily. The typical approach found at service schools has been to assign the school chaplain to teach three or four hours of ethics. In most cases this instruction has been very similar at the basic and advanced courses and is often replicated at Command and General Staff College (C&GSC). These lectures are often supplemented by case studies of "ethical dilemmas" for group discussion. Recent observations of these discussions at basic, advanced and staff college levels have revealed what the students: 1) lack conceptual understanding of professional ethics to address the issues substantively; and 2) lack a common vernacular to communicate on the substantive issues. This results in the group discussion degenerating into a series of "war stories" and a blaming of "them" (usually the next higher rank as a collectivity). The underlying ethical issues are frequently left unaddressed.

We should not waste our time in despair over the bleak but oversimplified picture painted above. There are sufficient exceptions of individual commanders and instructors facilitating the learning of professional ethics to be somewhat reassuring. The curriculum review committees of USMA have identified the problem, as have RETU and the Army Training Study (ARTS), a recent Secretary of the Army, and the Chief of Staff of the Army. The TRADOC Chaplain is assisting in improving the state of instruction at the schools; the ROTC Leadership and History Instructor Workshops both address the issues, albeit somewhat lightly; more importantly, senior commanders are directing meaningful effort to the issue.

The Army does not fare badly in comparison with civilian professions in its treatment of professional ethics. The Hastings Center Special Project on the Teaching of Ethics, published in December 1977, reports similar spottiness of quality and a high degree of lip-service given to ethics instruction in medicine, law, public administration, journalism, social science, engineering and business. The armed services have a potentially great advantage over other professions in the degree of control that exists over a complete pre-accession through retirement school system.

While we may expect a similarly high level of personal morality from the entire officer corps, the ethical issues faced do change qualitatively and quantitatively as an officer progresses through a complete career. The falsification of weapons qualification records by a lieutenant touches relatively few lives for a relatively short

period. The falsification of bombing reports by a general touches the populations of several nations with a long-lasting impact. The essential behavior is identical in both cases, but the organizational and political requirements for ethical conduct increase as one rises through the hierarchy. The impact of an officer's ethicality, unethicality or anethicality therefore expands greatly throughout career progression.

The educational strategy outlined below is derived from Monograph #8 and focuses on the existing schooling levels: pre-commissioning, basic, advanced, Command and General Staff College (C&GSC), and War College. As RETO recommendations are incorporated into the system, the place or mode of instruction may change. The concept presented here is compatible with the RETO framework and focuses on organizationally required behaviors by level.

Precommissioning

Professional ethics are intertwined with the professional status perceived by the individual. A person who perceives an occupation to be merely a job will act on the job in accord with that perception; one who perceives professional status accorded to the occupation will also act accordingly. The first step toward the learning (teaching) of professional ethics is the learning (teaching) of the professions' role, status and relationship to the greater society.

Education at the pre-commissioning level is not totally under control of the military professions. Accessions from nearly 300 ROTC detachments vary greatly in their educational and experiential background. It is recommended, here, as did RETO, that cadets be required to take certain behavioral science and humanities courses. The USMA core curriculum currently exceeds these recommendations.

The definition, "A professional ethic is a secular code of behavior as applied to a particular occupational group," suggests several things. The cadet should understand:

1. What is a profession.
2. What is ethics.
3. What affects human behavior.

The response to these three items is complex and generally the product of a broad liberal education. The latter two items have been addressed for hundreds of years. The first is largely a product of 20th century sociology and political science to analyze the relationship among societal sub-groups.

Accepting that the army lacks total control over the curricula of a few hundred colleges makes behavioral learning objectives unattainable and meaningless at the present. The leadership text developed at USMA for use by USMA and ROTC was developed in a logical, analytical manner and is compatible with previous recommendations for leadership instruction. This text is used by many ROTC Instructor Groups; but before any conclusion is made as to comparability of programs, expanded cooperation and coordination between USMA and ROTC is required. Specifically, the Leadership Workshop needs to be doubled in both length and attendance to insure coverage of all ROTC Instructor Groups.

Recommendations for Pre-Commissioning Level:

1. Designate Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership at West Point the co-ordinating agency for leadership and professional ethics instruction.
2. Require all ROTC Instructor Groups to teach an adapted USMA leadership course.
3. Require each ROTC cadet to complete, for credit, one course from each of the following groups:
 - a. (1) American Government
(2) Constitutional Law
(3) United States Diplomatic History
(4) Sociology of Professions
 - b. (1) Introductory Philosophy
(2) Ethics
(3) Epistemology
(4) History of Western Thought
(5) Comparative Religions
(6) History of Religious Thought
 - c. (1) General Psychology
(2) Social Psychology
(3) Introductory Sociology

- (4) Cultural Anthropology
 - (5) Social Anthropology
- d. Military History (taught by ROTC)
 - e. Military Leadership (taught by ROTC)
4. Local PMS is to evaluate courses available, establish compatibility with above proposed titles, and insure completion.

Basic Course

Attendance at this course represents the individual's introduction to the organization, if not to the profession. As such, it is the first step for most officers in the controlled socialization to professional norms. The emphasis must shift from the personal development (pre-commissioning) to the development of the individual as an organizational being.

The following are to be addressed:

1. What is an officer.
2. Relationships with superordinates, subordinates and peers.
3. Organizational (army and unit) representative.
4. The components of the professional ethic.
5. Setting the example.

Objectives:

1. The officer will be able to explain Article II, Section 2, of the U.S. Constitution. Specifically, the officer will identify the "special agent" relationship of the officer to the President.

Reference: U.S. Constitution.

2. The officer will be able to recite the oath of office, explain its component parts and relate the oath to Article II of the Constitution.

Reference: Oath of Office, U.S. Constitution.

3. The officer will be able to differentiate between his status as an officer of the United States under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution and the status of warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted persons under Article I, Section 8.

Reference: U.S. Constitution.

4. The officer will be able to discuss the standards of conduct required by the organization.

Reference: Army Regulation (AR) 600-20; Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

5. The officer will be able to explain constitutionally the different punishments provided for in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) for crimes against officers and other ranks.

Reference: UCMJ, U.S. Constitution.

6. Given a series of brief ethically based situations pertinent to the OPMS specialty of the officer, the officer will be able to state the alternatives and list possible outcomes of each course of action.

Reference: Pertinent AR's. (Examples for this would include:

Finance Basic: Payment of partial or advanced pay.

AG Basic: Approval of compassionate reassignment.

QM Basic: Accepting delivery of questionable perishables from a regular supplier.

Combat Arms Basic: Meeting training requirements on paper.

Emphasis should be on meeting organizational requirements as per AR, with dilemmas being pointed out to superordinate person or headquarters.)

7. The officer will be able to explain or demonstrate the role of an officer as a representative of the organization.

References: AR 600-20, UCMJ, Armed Forces Officer.

8. The officer will be able to describe the reaction of subordinates to various actions on the part of the officer.

Reference: FM 22-100. (Examples should include punctuality, wearing the uniform, excessive profanity, honesty, abrasive treatment of subordinates.)

Advanced Course

This level of school marks the beginning of the officer's working through other officers as opposed to directly with enlisted persons. The responsibilities broaden to include advising other officers on ethical conduct, suggesting input to directives rather than simply obeying, controlling larger numbers of people and more frequently crossing organizational boundaries in performance of duty. In short, the responsibilities, impact and visibility of the officer increase. This greater visibility and representativeness begin to constrain the officer's behavior. The Army, and the officer's unit of assignment, can tolerate less variability and require more consistency of behavior. Subordinates expect higher consistency and standards of performance because captains "know the ropes."

Training at this level should begin to focus on recognition and correction of ethical dilemmas. Assisting others and responding to their questions and for assistance become as important as concern with personal conduct. The need for social distance becomes noticeably greater in order to discharge responsibilities dispassionately to immediate subordinate officers.

The following are to be addressed:

1. Relationship with superordinates, subordinates and peers.
2. Recognition of violation of professional and ethical standards.
3. Counseling of officers - personal and performance.

Objectives:

1. For the first four years (until current basic students reach the advanced course), objectives 1 and 4 from the basic course should be included in the advanced course.
2. Given a series of film vignettes (already prepared by USAIS and USAMPS), the officer will be able to identify and recommend corrective action for violation of social norms in the Army organization.

Reference: AR 600-20, UCMJ.

3. Given a hypothetical assignment appropriate to the OPMS code, the officer will be able to explain the organizational constraints on personal and professional behavior.

Reference: AR 600-200, The Armed Forces Officer.

4. Being given a series of brief ethically based situations pertinent to the OPMS specialty of the officer and including the hypothetical reaction of a peer or subordinate, the officer will evaluate the reaction, list the alternatives and conduct a simulated counseling session with a classmate.

Reference: Pertinent AR's.

5. The officer will, in privacy but with a faculty grading officer present, counsel a designated classmate on the classmate's professional conduct as a student at the course in progress.

Reference: FM 22-101; AR 600-20; Counseling instruction; school SOP. (This exercise can be used as part of the instructional blocs on counseling as well. It is recommended that it be videotaped for the counselor/student's replay.)

Staff College

Attendance at C&GSC or reaching field rank represents a major shift in the typical career progression. This shift signifies a move from rather discreet duty performance within one's entry specialty into staff positions. Relatively few field officers are in command positions, whereas the preponderance are in staff positions. One's work milieu thus shifts from one of vertical relationships to one of horizontal relationships. Contact is primarily with other staff officers of similar rank. Staff officers control or affect others not through direct command but through the written media of anonymous SOP's, regulations and staff coordination. The impact of role modeling for these officers appears to be slight; the impact of written communication appears great.

At the same time it must be noted that the C&GSC is educating the next generation of battalion commanders and principal staff officers. The role-modeling requirement of a battalion commander is significant.

The requirements for C&GSC, then, are disparate:

1. Application for traditional staff functioning in virtually any specialty in the Army.
2. Application, especially role modeling, for mid-level commanders and primary staff officers.

These two separate and distinct areas are to be addressed.

Objectives:

1. a. The officer will critically review an AR series pertinent to the OPMS that annotates those promulgated policies which, in the officer's professional judgment, are unrealistic and will be ignored, selectively applied, or cause lying in the field.
- b. The officer will defend the evaluation of a(above) to a group of students of like OPMS specialty.
- c. The officer will prepare, from the results of a and b above, and send a letter to the proponent DA staff agency in accordance with recommendations for change imprimatur on each regulation.

References: Pertinent AR's.

2. The officer will read a selection of several codes of professional conduct and, in discussion with classmates, relate the approaches suggested to classical management theory.

References: Barnard, C. I., The Functions of the Executive., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938.

Clapp, Jane, Professional Ethics and Insignia. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974.

Hastings Center, A Special Report on the Teaching of Ethics. Hastings, New York, December 1977.

3. Given a series of ethically based case studies involving command decisions below division level, the officer will be able to identify the underlying ethical issues, list the possible decisions and their predictable outcomes short-term and long-term, and defend a hypothetical decision to a group of classmates.

References: Case studies.

4. A series of lectures by mid- to upper-level managers and professional groupings is recommended. The officer will become aware of the similarities and dissimilarities between the mid-level military and civilian managerial standards and practices.

5. The officer will read the AWC Study on Military Professionalism (1970) and discuss with a group of classmates each of the thirty-one recommendations included. This discussion will focus on whether or not the recommendation was implemented and what the results of implementation and non-implementation have been for the Army.

War College

Attendance at the War College prepares officers to step into the highest circles of policy implementation positions. They will provide advice and input to the policy makers in the Army. The issues addressed transcend the limited boundaries of any OPMS specialty, any sub-unit and indeed of the Army itself. The Army's leadership operates in an environment that is political, economic, and social as well as military. Specific behavioral preparation for entering this system or advising the operator in this system is virtually impossible. The current approach of using readings, seminars, individual research and guest speakers appears effective. The same approach can be extended into the realm of professionalism to develop an appreciation for the officer's highly visible and broadly impactful role.

The major issues to be addressed are ethics in policy making and the totality of role modeling in high organizational positions.

Recommendations:

1. The officer will participate in a seminar reading and discussion of various ethical theories, alternatively defending different approaches to ethical behavior.

Reference: Broad, Charlie Dunbar, Five Types of Ethical Theory. New York: Humanities Press, 1962 (or similar comparative approach).

2. Using the theories discussed in 1. above, the officer will critically review the behavior of key personalities in military history and fiction, showing approaches apparently used, alternatives, and probable outcomes.

References: a. A selection of military fiction such as Myrer, A., Once An Eagle; Jones, J., From Here to Eternity; Bunting, J., Lionheads.

- b. A selection of military history such as Thucydides, Peloponnesian Wars; Fall, B., Street Without Joy.

3. Using contemporary newspaper accounts and other public documents, the officer will review a policy decision of importance to the military, analyzing the likely ethical orientation of the principals.

References: Contemporary accounts of policy decisions such as Bay of Pigs, TFX (F-111), Korean Troop Withdrawal, Tonkin Gulf Resolution, Dismissal of General MacArthur.

4. The officer will conduct a case study of the My Lai Affair through analysis of the acts of each level of command as reported in the Peers

Report. This analysis will be conducted in light of the conclusions and recommendations of the AWC Study on Military Professionalism focusing on the effect of the modeled behavior on subordinates.

References: a. AWC Study on Military Professionalism, 1970.

b. DA, Report of the Department of the Army Review of the Preliminary Investigation in the My Lai Incidents (Vol I), 14 March 1970.

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